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JESUS AND OUR HUMAN NEEDS

LOWELL RUSSELL DITZEN

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" . . . Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

MATTHEW 4:19

"Life, to be worthy of a rational being, must be always in progression; we must always propose to do more and better than in time past."

SAMUEL JOHNSON

I

MAN'S NEED FOR PURPOSE

Man's need—for purpose! As I put these words before me, there comes to my mind a man who is typical of many. His chronological clock is at the fifty mark. He has a family and his affairs are in reasonably good order, but he feels that he has reached dead center. "I am secure in my business," he told me, "but it seems I am doomed to spend the rest of my life constantly repeating the same things I've been doing these many past years. I wish I had some goal or purpose—something of the sort that drove me on years ago." What is this man asking for?

Have you ever watched a little boy eagerly joining his father to help him repair the bookcase or wash the car? And have you noticed the little girl who is bub-

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blingly insistent on helping her mother clean the bathtub or run the vacuum cleaner? Isn't there revealed here, at these early stages in life, a desire to do something, to be something, to mean something—and thereby gain a sense of purpose?

And there's the student home from school. He has been influenced by the aimless chatter of many bull sessions, or is overimpressed by some professor who sneers at faith and treats ethical questions with cynicism. "I can't see any rhyme or reason in life," he says. "It's like an endless beach where the individual is nothing but a tiny grain of sand. Does it make any difference what one does or does not do?" But the wistfulness of his question tells you that he wants to see a difference—and be certain of it.

I remember the words of a woman. "There was a reason for my being," she said, "when my husband was alive and my children needed me. It's different now. I am taken care of financially, but that's about all. What I'm primarily concerned with these days is to go to the doctor with some complaint or other. I am going through the motions of holding on to life. But what else am I doing? What is the purpose I am involved in? I'm afraid there isn't any." And her confession shows that she wishes it were not so.

A psychologist told me of a patient who was having a recurrent dream in which he saw a large statue that looked like himself. He could become one with that statue. But when he did, he found it full of holes, just like some piece of modern sculpture. These empty spaces were in him, he felt, and he realized that he was a part of that emptiness rather than of the statue itself. And the

meaninglessness of it all filled him with so much sadness that he woke up weeping.

That emptiness and sadness we always experience when life appears to be without direction, when the way for living is lost. The need for purpose, a reason for being, is an elemental need in all of us. We can't tolerate it when we get bogged down in ruts that, in Shakespeare's words, make life appear as "a tale told by an idiot . . . signifying nothing."

Jesus knew of this need. Time and again He speaks of our deep need for purpose. Fishermen by the Sea of Galilee hear Him. "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."¹ It is as though He says, "You'll always be fishermen, but your efforts will be more significant. Entering into the spirit of my life, your life will gain a dimension it didn't have before." In so many of His words we feel that there is a hydraulic power in Him, a power that lifts men to a finer purpose. Thus, He pulled up Zacchaeus, the taxgatherer who had succumbed to bribery and cheating and lost his self-respect. Jesus lifted him to a new sense of honor and honesty.²

And there is the rich young ruler who senses the limitations of all material things. "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" he cries earnestly. And Jesus replies, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor."³ The Master's answer, we perceive, is for this one person who needs to use his possessions for a larger purpose. Jesus is trying to help him find that purpose.

Purpose! It speaks from every page of His biography. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."⁴

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How many persons have cried, "I'm nothing. I'm a useless grain of sand on an endless beach"?

Jesus said and ever says, that it isn't so, that you are a child of God! ⁵

Every human being who felt the touch of His wisdom and love had a golden purpose he didn't have before. That magic of His is at work today, too!

Any student of His life is doing a disservice to Him if he doesn't question life's meaning. No matter what your circumstance, your age, your station, your experience—don't forget this: *You are a soul*. There is a powerful purpose in guarding your soul for that time when it returns to the mystery of God from whence it came. It should be surrendered after this brief life adventure, with a larger degree of love and faith and understanding than it had at the beginning. This is one of the oft-repeated themes of Christ's teaching.⁶ It knocks the foundations out from under any sense of purposelessness.

What is the soul? Here is a working definition: The soul is that actuating spiritual entity in man that can wonder and pray and reason and improve.⁷ There is a purpose, towering and stalwart among lesser ones that have their day only to fall before the winds and waves of time. That purpose is to guard and nurture that most precious of all treasures in the universe—your immortal soul.

Open your life to Christ and say, "I'm a lonely and solitary person," and He will be with you. Cry out that you get weary with the repetition of your tasks, and He will understand. Whimper that you feel someone else could do what you're doing as well as or better than yourself, and He will smile, but He will listen quietly.

But tell Him that you have nothing worthwhile to do or be—and, as by Galilee long ago, He will call you to a truer look at yourself. His love and wisdom will tell you that you are overlooking the prime fact about yourself—you *are a soul, a unique soul*. Out of the mystery and wonder from whence you came, some day you will return.

Nothing in all this world, with its infinitely varied forms of life, can do what you and I can—stand at the threshold of some new year and look back on the past months and say, “I have achieved.” Even if we haven’t moved mountains, no other creature has that haunting sense that more could and should have been done.

“I have gained a little more patience, a touch more tolerance, a bit more sympathy, a smidgen more sense than I had ten years ago.” What else in this universe can say that? Not a physical creature, not a tree quietly fulfilling its destiny. Only a living soul can say that.

The knowledge of man’s special spiritual merit will never escape you as you look at the natural world. It is that merit which always claimed the interest of our Saviour. Here’s a homely incident which illustrates man’s spiritual identity for me:

For a number of years our family has had the problem of what to do about the flies that appear late in the spring and early in the fall at our summer home in northern New York State. They particularly congregate around the window frames of the house and barn. After looking at our aging barn, which seemed to have more cracks than anything else, I concluded the only sure way to keep the flies out was to burn it down. But my curiosity was roused.

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I learned that one fly produces a thousand offspring, and that the life span of each is ten to twelve days. Little wonder we had so many visitors! Simple arithmetic revealed that in a month and a half one cluster fly can produce a quadrillion flies—a million times the population of this earth. Here, I mused, is but one tiny insect, of one genus, of which there are innumerable types on any acreage of meadow and woodland. They are born in astronomical numbers. Why? What is their purpose? To live, to seek a bit of nectar, to reproduce, to find a crack under the shingles, to stay warm, to die!

Later, standing in the eventide, as the sun was fading out of the sky, and savoring that majestic moment when silence falls over the world, I asked myself, as I ask you, How is man different? In this intricate universe—where the cluster fly, which can produce in less than two months a million times the human population of the world, is itself but one tiny part of a vast multitude of crawling, hopping, creeping, swimming, flying, burrowing, or running species—what is special about man? Does he have a purpose beyond being born, seeking food, enjoying the sun, and seeking shelter against the winter cold?

The answer to me then and now and always is undeniable. *Man is different. He is a soul! He can remember. He can think. He can hope. He can change. He does not only dream of doing better tomorrow than he did today—he can do it!*

Of all creation he is the only one who can respond to Him who said, "Follow me!" No cluster fly, stirred to life by the sun's warmth, no deer running with flawless grace, no eagle soaring in distant nobility, can heed the

words, "Come, I will make you 'what you were meant to be.'" No, none of these can have a stirring of the spirit's endless inner depths that leads a man to kneel in adoration before the Christ and whisper, "Lord, I love Thee and will follow Thee to the end."

Here are a few sentences from a letter I received from a man in prison. The simplicity attests to the depth of this man's experience: ". . . I am thirty-eight now. I had lost myself somewhere along life, *and then through Christ* I'm doing my best to build a future happiness. You know, *I believe I can do it*. I'm learning each day and trying to be a Christian. I would like to help someone else. . . ." ⁸

Isn't this the meaning of what Jesus is saying: Come, lift the level of your existence. You can! You must! Walk with me. Trust me. I'll make you fishers of men.

His words can rightfully be interpreted as being a call to help and serve mankind. Let your life have wider purpose than your own well-being. Seek and lift your fellow men, as Jesus did, to higher spiritual levels!

How vast are the opportunities to help mankind! A current report tells us that the underfed people in the world, standing shoulder to shoulder, would circle the planet twenty-five times. The length of that line, at the rate the population is increasing, grows twenty miles a day.⁹

Oh, the need of mankind for you! The physical hunger, the emotional heartache, the spiritual pain, the problems of your neighbors—they all *call for you*, as for no one else. Out of the endless circles of creatures seeking existence, fulfilling their instincts, none can hear, none can respond, none is so needed as you. "Inasmuch

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as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”¹⁰ What a grand and sustaining purpose for being is given in these words!

You may be unmoved by this appeal. You may feel you are limited and say, “I don’t have enough contacts with other people,” or “My skill in dealing with men’s ills is limited,” or “My health and resources are so negligible.” To these, the spirit of Jesus says, “I am not talking alone about the wide and vast urgencies of God’s children throughout the world. Surely there is some person whose life touches yours? Are you helping or hindering that life? What have you done to give that person a spiritual lift?”

We are dependent on each other—bound to each other. Our spirit feeds on kindness, on consideration, on faith. Where do we get them but through the spirit of Jesus manifest in a life like yours! Your touch of consideration, your tender word of encouragement, is powerful bait to make you a fisher of men.

But let’s assume you are still hesitant. Not just yet can you accept the implication of being a fisher for other men. Well, how about yourself? Just you? There is a commitment to yourself and your own needs that stands before any response to the struggles and pains of your fellow men. There is a purpose you cannot escape. It is to preserve your soul and to make it grow.

Certain of the Eastern religions have given longer contemplation to the matter of the origin and the destiny of the soul than has Western Christianity. Out of those many centuries of pondering has come the concept called “karma.”¹¹ It is an elaboration of the law that as a man sows, so shall he reap. It is a law to which we know we

are all bound. In Indian mysticism the fulfilling of karma involves more than one life lived here on earth.

In each cycle here the soul is to work out an important stage in its ultimate destiny. The unique human soul goes through a continuous evolution toward perfection as it passes from one mortal frame to another. A deepening wisdom is to be won.

I mention this as a deep and serious answer, accepted by millions of people in this world, to the question of man's purpose. It has been a helpful thought to many a person who has cried, "Why am I here? What is my purpose?"

Our Judeo-Christian beliefs agree with some of the Eastern doctrine when they affirm in majestically beautiful language

*When the silver cord is loosed,
When the golden bowl is broken,
When the pitcher is crushed at the fountain—
Then the dust returns unto the earth as it was,
And the soul returns unto God who gave it.*¹²

Our New Testament elaborates on that concept of the Old Testament. It says that when faithful men pass the portals of death and turn toward the mansions of the Eternal City, they will hear the words, "Well done—enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."¹³

You ask, "How can I realize this purpose? How can I preserve and develop my soul? What is the way?"

It is through Jesus! What is the beginning? It is to heed the call which was meant not only for those who responded to it first by Galilee, but for all humanity throughout the ages. "Come ye after me. Follow me."

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What He said in effect to Peter and John was: "Be my disciples." ¹⁴ That was and remains his exhortation. They came to the Rabboni, the Teacher. They sat with Him daily. They listened to His words. They learned not alone by what He said but by what He did. They loved Him more and more. Under the sun of His inspiration their souls grew till they left their names in the spiritual legacy of all time. They became men of spiritual persuasiveness and power.

In like manner He comes to every life. There is a particular pertinence to His call as we sink into the bog of aimlessness. He senses our need. He knows we want a purpose, and He calls, as to men of long ago, to follow Him. He says that our lives will, with Him, have a wider meaning, a more blessed significance. He adds, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." ¹⁵

On that "way," which is found only in Him, through His "truth," and in His "life," man finds peace and joy. And why? Because he has a purpose that links him to all that is worthy in the present and all that is desired tomorrow.

When a man answers this call, the highest miracle of all takes place—behold, a man, filled with purpose, head upright, walking with glad strides in harmony with the distant music of the spheres.

*"Take therefore no thought for the morrow. . . .
Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."*

MATTHEW 6:34

*"Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what
may never happen. Keep in the sunlight."*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

II

MAN'S NEED FOR FREEDOM FROM ANXIETY

In a fine little book titled *World Faith* (a brief study of the world's great religions), the author, Ruth Cranston, tells of an experience in one of the minor museums of Paris. Accompanied by a Frenchman of sophistication, she was looking at a life-sized statue of the Buddha. Her companion said, "When I look at him, I know that I have come home . . . to what man was meant to be. . . . Buddha sought the answer to life and its sufferings; and here before us is the answer: perfect love, perfect wisdom, perfect peace."

To find such an expression of the perfect, to recognize and adore it, and to say, "Here the highest and deepest and best in me finds a home"—that is a beautiful and moving experience.

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I too have had this profoundly satisfying experience of identification, although not with the Buddha. I have an indelible recollection of wandering in the famed Temple of Bangkok, which contains what has been called the greatest collection of Buddhas in the world. The magnificent life-sized bronzes are arranged in separate niches under a protecting roof. Here, seeing the Buddha in various poses, wrought in ageless and living bronze, I felt the agony of his search till he found the ultimate peace. As I recalled the long quest, the successes and failures of that magnificently spiritual man, some of the din and the harshness of the world faded. There was a surge of respect, almost piety, for the rare spiritual devotion and achievement of the Buddha. But I could not say, as did Ruth Cranston's companion, "I have here come home."

But I have that sense before Jesus Christ. It came not long ago from a dark effigy near the cathedral in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. There, the visitor, debarking from his air-conditioned ship, walks up the dusty street amid shops and hovels to see the Saviour on the Cross, which is widely known as "The Black Christ." The body hangs against the sky. As I saw it, I felt it was bent in pity and pain and forgiveness over the slums that surround it. Here was a symbol granting mercy and inspiration not only to Haiti's suffering poor, but also to the jaded tourist, with nothing to complain about beyond the heat and the price of souvenirs. I feel an affinity to that Man there!

It is a sense of humility that wells up into consciousness when I see Him bowing in Gethsemane and agoniz-

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ing over the unwanted cup, or blessing little children, or saying, "Come unto me . . . and I will give you rest." ¹ Here I find a spiritual "at-homeness."

He speaks to the deepest needs in me and in you. He speaks, as I think no man ever has, to the need for freedom from the gnawing anxieties that can tear us apart in life's hectic and hurried days. There is great relevance in His teaching as He tells us not to be anxious but to trust in God—to let each day's own trouble and task be sufficient unto itself.²

I need to hear that. I need to learn from it. I need to find out how it's achieved—and you do, too!

One of the most fruitless drains on your life and mine—on our physical, our mental, our spiritual energies—comes from painful anticipations, from uncertainty, from vexation, from over-concern about the affairs of our lives. It isn't only over momentous matters. In the small and inconsequential ones, too, the erosion of anxiety does its work.

There is a saying among desert people, "It is the little white ants that pick the carcass cleaner than the lion." We know the truth thereof—we drain the best energies of mind and body over appearance, over a telephone call, or a train schedule.

We need that spiritual at-homeness, that looking up to Jesus Christ. See Him now as He stands before Pilate; serene in His self-command as He speaks by Galilee; as He speaks today again and again and again saying, "Learn of me." ³ "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." This is where I would have a spiritual home! This superb teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, meets a need in me.

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As you enter into His life and feel the amazing accomplishments of His brief ministry, there are guiding lessons spoken to you "through" His words and "beneath" His acts. The idea of "sufficient unto the day" meant for Him fully entering into every moment. Nothing was lost for Him.⁴ He neither languished away His life in inactivity nor did He squander His life in a multitude of details.

One man, semiretired, said, "Occasionally I go down to my office and what do I do? I shuffle and reshuffle the papers piled on my desk; I talk to an old crony or two; and then I come back, having done nothing because there's nothing important to do. I'm not happy with myself. Maybe I'll do something tomorrow."

For another, inundated with duties, there are calls to be made, notes to be answered, papers to be read, questions to be answered. If he gives each a cursory, confused glance, he will probably decide there is so much to do that what is attempted is done poorly, and much is left undone.

As one looks closely at the life of Jesus, one sees how He must have developed the capacity of full concentration on each moment. How else can you explain the fact that He "saw" Zacchaeus, alone, above hundreds of others, sitting in the tree? ⁵ How else can we explain the incident in which He "felt" the touch of the woman who clutched at His robe as He passed in the crowd? ⁶ Isn't that a part of the secret that makes the words that He spoke two thousand years ago as valid today as they were then? There was such absorption in each moment of His life that His response to it was perfect, universal, everlastingly contemporary. And one of His guiding

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secrets must have been in the thought, "sufficient unto the day . . ."

A most practical elaboration of this counsel came from a wise and experienced woman, who said she made a list of the things she'd like to do each day, as well as what needed to be done. Then, taking the list, she cut it in half, devoting herself to doing, in order, one thing at a time. What wonderfully practical counsel! Much can be accomplished by that rule. What is done is done gladly because it is manageable. Doing each thing in turn makes a watertight compartment in which to do that particular thing and do it well.

Jesus certainly delimited His interests. He concentrated on the thing at hand. True, practical-minded and realistic as He was, He had a sense of tomorrow's duties. But He disciplined himself to keep the tasks ahead from intruding on the urgent "now."

Let the day's own trouble, Jesus is saying, be sufficient for this day. Tomorrow is going to have problems of its own. Don't let them crowd in here and now.

To deal reasonably with the portent of tomorrow and all the tomorrows in your mind and heart, and to come to some resolution about them, will strengthen your spirit. What will be your attitude? Will it be in the thought, "Tomorrow is in God's hands"? Will you develop a spirit that can face any tragedy that "might" happen to you with the words, "I can't do a thing about it right now, but when it comes, if it does, I will, with Christ's grace, stand up to it"?

Jesus, of course, had to face the frightful anxiety of the crucifixion. Rarely did He let it cloud over the present moment. And that capability in Him must have

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been due to the fact that *He kept tomorrow in its place!* No silly anxiety about it or fruitless longing—"sufficient unto the day."

In the spiritual literature of Islam, there is an insight worth sharing with you from a dervish named Jelal, who broached a thought preceding, by five hundred years, Darwin's idea of evolution. Jelal wrote:

*I died from the mineral and became the plant;
I died from the plant and reappeared in an animal;
I died from the animal and became a man.
Wherefore should I fear? When did I grow less by
dying?
Next time I shall die from the man
That I may grow the wings of the angel.⁷*

Anxiety clouds the day of many a person today, because some great concept of tomorrow hasn't settled in his mind and his heart. I make no plea for accepting the Islamic mystic's concept concerning the future. But, as I believe Christ wants us to see Him, I must say to myself and to you that we need to have a dynamic and hopeful thought of the morrow!

Jesus avoided failing, avoided making mistakes. You say, "Well, doesn't everyone?" My answer is No. Too many of us court errors. We build up anxiety through thoughtlessness and carelessness. We tempt catastrophe. Some of us do it because we try to do too much. Others of us, out of pride or egotism, try to do things beyond our capabilities. As we bang off important matters in a slap-happy, half-baked way, we tempt disaster and tease failure.

Do you remember your dreams? Think of the ones

that are the most troublesome, the most painful. Aren't they those in which some inadequacy is going to be exposed? The examination is to be held in just a moment and you are unprepared. Or there is a report to be made and the important officials are ready to receive it, but you haven't completed it.

Some incompetence or indiscretion of yours, long hidden, is now going to come out in the open. Or perhaps a "pose" that you have long held, and "gotten by with" fairly well, is now going to appear in its true light. Isn't it in the possibility that our chicanery, our "cover-ups," our hidden inadequacies, will be revealed for what they are that much of our anxiety arises?

Jesus deliberately avoided creating for Himself such anxiety-producing situations. For example, once He attempted to preach at Nazareth, His home town. Meeting antagonism, He did not fret. He "vanished" from the midst of hysterical critics. Did He go back time and again and try to win Nazareth? No, He left, never to return. And He counseled His followers that if one village didn't receive them, if they met an indifferent reception or violent opposition, they were to shake the dust off their sandals and to pass on.⁸ He avoided anxiety-producing situations.

"Oh," but you say to me, "how about Gethsemane and Calvary and the Cross? Why did He submit Himself to this?"

Answer: To try to show us poor mortals that His love and God's was so deep and strong that it would be victorious over the cruelest deliberately accepted suffering. Yes, the Cross could have been avoided. But it was not.

I've been reading with profit Arnold Toynbee's stud-

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ies of the long, long centuries of religious history. His mind, so opulent in knowledge of man's records over the past six thousand years, and his objective historian's approach come time and time again to stand in awe before Christ's suffering. Among all the world's religions and their teachings, it is at Christ's acceptance of the Cross that Dr. Toynbee pauses the longest.

The Cross is separate and unique. The Man who allowed Himself to be hoisted up there, with all the pain involved, engaged in an act that is separate from what marks a major characteristic of His life—to avoid worrisome situations.

How really foolish is the reasoning that says the only way we learn is from our mistakes. If this were true, logic would say that the individual who made the most blunders ought to be the wisest person, or the one who had the most failures ought to be the most successful. It isn't so.⁹

From Jesus' life we get the teaching: Concentrate on your good abilities, the particular gifts that are yours. Develop the strong inclinations and skills that are your endowment. Don't envy the resources of someone else! Develop your own! Cherish and live by your most competent, your most successful moments! Strain and anxiety can be diminished.

Finally, at the center of the discipline that makes one triumphant over dissipating anxieties is trust in God's providence.¹⁰ I am confident that it was the sense that God was pervading all of life that gave Jesus a freedom from anxiety over any event or circumstance.

Fighting, resistance, struggle, rebellion, quick changes, abrupt and ill-conceived speech—Do you find

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these in Jesus? ¹¹ These both make for anxiety and are evidence of its dark presence. How little of them there was in Him.

To bend, to have a sense of relationship with all that comes your way, to be calm—these antidotes to anxiety can be cultivated by you and me, as they were by Jesus, through trust in the Sovereign God who's got the whole, wide world in His hand. We may be sure that the equanimity of Jesus came from those times when He probed to the deepest levels of thought and feeling and found God's way the only way. It is clearly told in the temptation experience. It is revealed in the Transfiguration. And in Gethsemane the ultimate cry of trust, "Not my will, but thine," gives the key to the stalwartness, the poise, that marks the Lord in the hours that follow.

Lao-tzu, the Chinese sage, did not have the depth of experience of Jesus. But his keen eye also observed the ways of nature and of men. He, too, called men to freedom from anxiety, asking for a suppleness of attitude and spirit. He put down his observations in this fashion:

*In life man is soft and tender,
In death he is rigid and hard.
In life plants are soft and pliant,
In death they are withered and tough.
Thus rigidity and hardness are companions of death;
Softness and tenderness are companions of life.*

This is wise counsel, for it is the erratically jumping grasshopper who, more often than the deliberate-moving caterpillar, ends up in the fire. But, here again, how best can that attitude be gained for the pressures of the day? The final, surest way is in the trust that sees God's hand

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in every day. It is God who orders the way of "the fowls of the air," who gives what is needful for "the lilies of the field," who cares for man, and who makes the day "sufficient" for the man who works wisely and trusts in Him.

A woman, full of years, who has lived her days with joy and poise, and who is looking ahead with hope, reflected the radiance of this Christian outlook as she wrote on her birthday: "Our Father has said His strength is made perfect in weakness. All glory to Him! Apart from Him we are nothing." Isn't it true that here is the final, light-filled path that leads to freedom from care?

Every man needs a spiritual at-homeness. You will find that when you know Jesus Christ you will be saying, "When I look at Him, I know that I have come home." I hope you are assisted in that finding as you ponder His secrets of poise, as you see Him developing a freedom from inner tension in His own life and then calling to you and to me with the wise and loving words, "Take no thought for the morrow. . . . Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him. . . ."

MATTHEW 5:25

"I never saw an instance of one or two disputants convincing the other by argument. I have seen many, on their getting warm, becoming rude, and shooting one another."

THOMAS JEFFERSON

III

MAN'S NEED FOR HARMONY

Some time ago a man from another part of our country chanced to be present at a funeral service in the church which I serve. Though I didn't meet him and don't know him, he sent me a lengthy and revealing letter which contained these sentences:

I am one of those individuals who, years ago, got sick of the same old tiresome record that our men of the cloth play most of the time. To those of us who are inquisitive thinkers, with minds that challenge everything that falls into the area of the mysterious and the intangible, such dull insults to our intelligence accomplish only one of three results—either we become atheists, agnostics, or apathetic and irreligious non-churchgoers. I suppose I fall into one or both of the last two categories.

Yet when I was in your church last week, I could not

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help but feel that perhaps there was something to the message that was voiced two thousand years ago, although I am still convinced that many get lost in the fog of interpretation of what Christ said. At any rate, I am determined to take one more shot at religion.

What a tragedy, I said to myself, that that one man in history, Jesus Christ, who, of all men that ever lived, was most competent in making the mysterious clear, and who tried to deal plainly with the most tangible things of life—what a pity that that man should seem obscure to a sincere quester in the twentieth century! Jesus was constantly seeking to say something down-to-earth to that correspondent of mine about how to live, and how to do it successfully, right here and right now.

Look closely at one section of His teaching,¹ which seeks to help man get along more harmoniously with his fellows. In one particular passage from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus lays out some counsel to meet the deep need within us for harmony and compatibility with other people. He's speaking about murder. The old law stands: "Thou shalt not kill!" You don't change a jot or a tittle of it. But Jesus continues, "I say unto you that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

Is this teaching off on some nebulous track? God help us. It shouldn't be. Anger and alienation are as close to each of us as breathing and the person nearest to us. Jesus is telling us to watch our anger because it can lead to murder! This can be the beginning of the horrible finale.

Look at some sordid crime. Learn the whole story. Lay bare the motive. What do you discover? Often it's a

little fire of emotion, left uncontrolled, that ended in a dreadful blaze of passion! The civil courts may try a man because of this end result. But, by the spiritual laws Jesus was seeking to have us live by, anger in your being is judged before another jury—that of your own conscience—the voice of the everlasting justice that speaks in your soul.

He continues, "Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council."² There is a descending staircase if you don't control anger. It goes down and down in ever-increasing viciousness and degradation.

What does *raca* mean? "You good-for-nothing," "you wretch," "you scoundrel" might be the modern equivalent. The ill-advised emotion now shows itself in ill-advised speech. What happens then? You reap in kind. The ego you injure in someone else despises you. As you sow, so shall you reap. It is as inescapable as the rising and the setting of the sun.

The warning is clear—watch giving verbal expression to an insult which will belittle someone else. Send a dart into the sensitive spirit of your neighbor and the reaction comes as when you kick a dog—teeth are bared, antagonism shows itself.

But Jesus continues, "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."³ Here the insult is more derogatory. It's a contemptuous sneer. The mental guards one should put on one's speech are further disregarded. You are saying, "You don't have a mind." That can be as damaging emotionally as a sword thrust is hurtful physically. Do not say, "Thou fool." If you do you are in danger of hell-fire.

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That word translated "hell" corresponds to the word "Gehenna." There isn't occasion here to pursue fully Jesus' thought on hell.⁴ But, as I study the totality of His teaching, I'm sure it does not support a single concept of an everlasting and an inescapable fire where men are placed because of their earthly misdemeanors or sins.

Gehenna was a deep and a narrow vale to the south of Jerusalem. Called the Valley of Hinnom thousands of years ago, an altar to the fire god Moloch was established there. Parents placed their children on the burning altar in sacrifice to the fire god. Can't you, in imagination, hear the agonized screams of children being burned to death on the shrine to Moloch in Gehenna? By the time of Jesus, the valley was used as a dump. The refuse and garbage of the city was thrown there and burned.

This, then, is the teaching: Guard against anger lest it get to the point where you use insulting language and call someone a fool. You will regret it as you are judged before the inescapable court of your own conscience, by the spiritual laws of God. More, you are going to destroy the harmony that ought to exist between individuals. Then, rather than finding yourself living on the heights of Jerusalem, you're going to be ostracized. The only place for you is amid the stench and smoke and aloneness of the foul valley of Gehenna.

Then comes this counsel (notice how His teaching is so ordered, so logical): Do not delay being reconciled with someone who has something against you, or against whom you have some resentment. Change the course of anger's downpull. Do something!

You may even be at worship and close to finding cleansing and forgiveness. If, in that moment, you re-

member some bitter alienation, if it comes right then, don't delay! Rectify that estrangement! Go! Don't put it off! Be reconciled with your brother!

Do we need to repeat what He's saying? Yes, we do. Jesus felt the merit of repetitive teaching. Don't let anger settle into you. Restrain sharp speech, and then, overtly, do something to stop its acid eating at your heart. Go to the individual and say what you are led to say: "I'm sorry. I was at fault. Forgive me. Let me make restitution. I can't stand this estrangement between us. Please let's get it straightened out."

Then comes this further advice, "Agree with thine adversary quickly whiles thou art in the way with him." ⁵ Don't argue. Don't dig in your heels. Don't insist that your position is right. Get rid of the attitude that you are going to fight to the end. You are wrong, you are so wrong, if you do.

You tell me about someone who appears hostile to you. There's another person who irritates you with his blatant ideas and braggadocio talk. How will you handle this? How will you let it affect you? The counsel of Jesus is, "Agree with your adversary quickly." If you walk away from it, trying to ignore your feeling of injustice, your sense of disharmony remains to bother you mentally and sour your spirit.

Be agreeable! How pertinent that is in our modern world where we, geographically, are a family. Your life and the life of your civilization may go down into destruction unless we learn the ABC's of self-control and agreeableness.

Is this irrelevant or foggy teaching? If it so appears to you, the fault is not that of the Master who expressed

it. It's the fault of this poor interpreter who is trying to repeat it.

How many sleepless hours of the night could be turned into fruitful rest if an individual simply applied this principle of agreeableness and let it express itself in some such form as, "You probably are right." What cleavages would be averted if individuals practiced this technique of agreeing quickly.⁶ "Thank you for your point of view. You may be right!"

The working of this method goes hand in hand with a basic concept of respect for every individual and a willingness to learn from other people.

That word "agree" doesn't mean that you accept your adversary's position. It doesn't mean you compromise your own convictions. The dictionary tells us that "agree" means "accept or receive kindly." To be agreeable is to express openness, good will—to smile rather than frown.

One of the world's greatest men, in my judgment, was Pericles, the Athenian. After twenty-five centuries, Greece, his native land, still lives through the inspiration of its architecture, its law, its literature, in its headless and armless marbles bequeathed to the ages. These treasures can give many a person today the sense of an ennobling manhood and womanhood which is still ahead.

The golden age of Athens came to its zenith through the genius of Pericles. Though public speaking was not his major vocation, he was known as an orator. As you study his speeches (they are preserved in the works of the historian Thucydides) you will acknowledge him as extremely gifted in the use of the spoken word. But more than this, I think you will mark the fact that his ad-

dresses are free from harshness. There is an absence of any caustic spirit that would irritate either friend or foe. There is no vituperation, no irony. Pericles built his public addresses on the assumption that the majority of men were honest, just, and doing what they thought was best for themselves and for others. The harmonious atmosphere produced by that spirit was a major factor in Greece's high development of civilization.

A biographer recalls that on one occasion Pericles was berated in the streets by a rowdy. Making no answer, he kept walking on silently toward his home. The man followed, continuing his abuse all the way to the house. By that time it was dark. Still saying nothing to the man, Pericles ordered one of his servants to take a torch to light the man home so that no harm would befall him.

Little wonder that Pericles was given the loyalty and service in peacetime which most leaders could command only in war. And he could truly say on his deathbed, "I never caused a single Athenian to wear mourning." He was a man who practiced the art of living based on respect for every man.

One of the men I've known to be most developed in this skill was the president of a theological seminary. Among other responsibilities, he listened to fledgling ministers propounding their views. Some of them felt they had the word from on high, and at times tried to instruct him in positions at variance with his solid and long-held one. But his attitude was one of extreme patience. Everything was amiable. Yet, on occasion, after a fruitless conversation had gone on for a time, he would say, "I thank you so much for giving me your time and for sharing your views with me." If there was evidence

of criticism, edginess, or a tendency to debate, he would say, with a smile but with firmness, "Long ago, I made it a rule never to argue, and I'm not going to do so now. Thank you once again. Now if we want to talk further, let's change the subject to what team will win the American League pennant this year."

To "agree with thine adversary" is a sure method to stop the rise of antagonism in oneself and abate it in another.

When you start living with this technique, a number of constructive things happen. You see a great deal more merit than demerit in other people. Healing and harmony come because you have cleared the air of negativism and acrimony. Every person has good in him. Each has a point of view which, for him, is important. For you and for me to feel antagonism and to shut others off, is not the way of discovery and growth.

Don't write other people off in irritation as "a wretch," "a jackass," "a fool" (even though you may not say it). No! Approach them agreeably, kindly. Listen, be quiet, agree quickly. Your kindness prompts a similar response. Before you know it, you see a worthy character before you—one that your agreeableness freed from the jungle of alienation.

Hasn't it been true for you, as it has for me, that some of the most unexpectedly rewarding human associations have come from individuals who, at first, seemed unpleasant? They were odd, a bit queer, or "different." To have alienated yourself by indifference, a rebuff, or the show of anger in any form could have left you bereft of a very great gain.

What a shame! What a tragic shame that a man

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seeking sincerely for value in Christianity said he couldn't find it in the church of Jesus Christ! I hope that that is not the case for you, needing to live away from the Gehennas of alienation, deeply wanting the abundant life. You and I can learn from the most practical and down-to-earth man that ever lived. We make a right step as we take hold of a principle that is as old as both divine and human wisdom, and which is summed up in the words, "Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him."

" . . . It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

MATTHEW 19:24 (Cf. Luke 12:20)

"Money was made for the free-hearted and generous."

JOHN GAY

IV

MAN'S NEED FOR MATERIAL THINGS

There's danger in wealth, in material things. This must be said bluntly to a nation such as ours, which has reached the highest peak of material wealth in history. The warning about the danger of wealth is ominously repeated throughout the Bible.

Listen to these words from the Epistle of James: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. . . . Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire." ¹

Hear Mary sing the Magnificat, before the birth of Christ, in which she quotes the words from the Old Testament: "He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away." ²

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Anyone knowing the Bible can properly argue that those sayings reflect a type of society in which Western man does not live today. True, there were vast economic injustices. In Jesus' day, a small minority of landowners and political leaders controlled the wealth of Israel. They lived in kingly luxury, while the majority of the people were barely able to exist in the most embittering poverty, held down by unjust taxations and fraudulent acts of those in power. There is venom, then, in James's prophetic damnation that the wealth of the rich will be a witness against them.

Jesus, too, in all His breadth and wisdom, a man who was friend of both the poor and the wealthy, yet said, with repeated gravity, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." ³

There are dangers in material things. Man needs to be told of these—and he needs to listen.

Why is Jesus so blunt, so harsh? The answer suggests itself when we ask what kind of a leader we need—one who tells us the battle is going to be easy, or one who charts the dangers?

Do you want as a mountain guide someone who assures you that you're going to have a delightful expedition, that the air is clear on the heights (so he's been told), the view lovely (so he's heard), and that you look in wonderful shape for the climb?

There is another guide who tells you that the climb is perilous and that you're not yet prepared to take it. He takes you in hand to teach you and you follow his disciplines. When the day comes he carefully marks the way for the ascent. He warns of every danger and tells you

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how to avoid it or master it. And he warns again and again that the fullest caution must be used all the way.

What kind of a leader do you want? Which one will you listen to? What man do you heed in learning the way of life? For the ventures and perils of living, you and I need a firm guide. And Jesus performs that role magnificently.

What are the dangers of wealth? A man can forget God. Weak men can be corrupted by material things. Shallow men, light-headed men, may be deluded into thinking that material things can be a substitute for character and ability and work. And the temptation toward inordinate pride is always present for all. Wealth becomes the object of existence when a false evaluation of material things takes hold. In such primary concern for wealth, the development of mind and spirit takes second place.

Yes, there are real dangers! To look at human history and see nations become flabby and directionless as they rise to stages of prosperity, and still say that "there is no danger," is extravagant folly. To look at the lives of individuals and see how drive, will power, constructive purpose, and high idealism can become softened by wealth, and to say "there is no danger," is to be blind to many a lurid instance that justifies the warnings of Jesus.

On the other hand, material possessions are necessary to man in any organized society. Jesus, in calling man to free himself from worldly preoccupation, still implies the necessity of possessions when He says, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." 4

The social justice which calls for the proper housing,

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feeding, and clothing of all people is a mark of the Christian conscience. But what should be the individual's attitude toward his possessions?

There are two principles, given by Jesus, that can be put in one sentence. The right evaluation of material possessions begins and ends with a recognition that all things are God's, for man is but a steward over the things he owns.

Jesus told of the man who built greater barns to store his increasing goods, going on with the process of accumulation and looking forward to the day when he could say, "Now finally I can eat, drink, and be merry." But God said to him, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" ⁵

Let's try to answer that question, "Whose shall those things be?" Granted, they will be taken over by someone else. Another person may be overseer of them for a time—be it a son or brother or other legatee. But the point I get is that those goods were never the exclusive possession of the man who acquired them. He had them only on a brief lend-lease basis. I wonder if it isn't so of all material things? Yes, we have a part in acquiring them. But, in the end, aren't they all in the hand of God?

In our family we occasionally play a game at dinner-time called "Who Am I?" or "What Am I?" We go around the table, each person taking a guess, trying to find out by elimination who or what one is. One tricky question supposed to help in determining an area of possibility is, "Are you a man-made or a God-made thing?"

It is fascinating to take this line of questioning. Let

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your mind wander anywhere with the queries: Where is there anything in this world that doesn't have its origin and end in the elemental particles and forces that come from what is "God-made"? What is there of which man can say he is the true owner?

Think of a complex mechanical installation that may be in your place of business. You may say, "We rented (or purchased) it. It's ours." But, consider more carefully. True, the various materials used in its fabrication were extracted from the earth and forged and processed by man. The delicate connections, no question about it, were done by his hands. But what is the source of every atom that goes into that complicated and delicate machine? Look at the mechanism in operation. It does the work of a hundred people. But, what makes it do the work? The electrical impulses that make it perform, the vision that conceived the operation, the energy and plan that executed its building—Whose are these? Just man's? Or God's, too?

Even the profit that it produces in operation—Whose is it? The owners of the company? Yes, but, like the man who built bigger barns, only for a time. And, when its usefulness is completed, what happens to its component parts? In one way or another, do they not go to the limitless reservoir of creative power which is in the hands of God? Isn't it true that everything—*every thing*—comes out of the shrouded mystery of eternity? The ultimate source of all wealth, all things, all creatures—man included—is, first and last, a gift of God.

You and I begin to get the proper perspective on our creative ability and on what it produces only as we begin to look on all as gifts of God. The capacity to treat our

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skills and possessions with respect, and to use them effectively and happily, comes as you think and say, "I am the guardian of this which is mine only for a time. It is a trust from God. It is to have a good purpose. By the way I use it, its real value will be determined."

This line of thinking shows the infinite variety of God's gifts that come to each of us. They vary in nature and value. As you give them a dimension beyond just "mine," the value is enhanced, and the joy in possessing and using is increased. Your compensation for the work you do, the energy that produced it, the things it can buy, the comforts and pleasures it may give to you and to others, the double extension of your life that can come in sharing a part of it—is not this a plurality of God's giving to you? Look on it as something that's holy. It is! What did you do to gain the mind, other than taking what was given to you at the beginning and developing it? What did you do to achieve the ability, the skill, you possess? They are gifts from God—that mind of yours and the will to discipline it. And what your mind creates is His gift too.

Look on your flower garden at the height of the blooming season, or pause to view the furniture and appointments you have rearranged in your living room, or smell the aroma of a cup of tea on a cold day. If you let your feelings and responses be concerned only with yourself—"I like the flowers," "Finally, I have the right location for the piano," "The tea is too strong for me,"—then what you have and see has that limitation of yourself. Its use and meaning dies with your ego-appraisal. But if you whisper, "Thank you, God, for this beauty, this goodness, the pleasure for man in a leaf of tea," your

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recognition of this dimension will give a hallowing and an added meaning. It will make what is committed to your stewardship both blessed and a blessing.

The question is an intriguing one: "Then whose shall those things be?"

The final answer has to be: They are God's. And, as one says it and feels it and knows it in looking at what one possesses, one not only has a fullness of enjoyment that can come only to such a wise keeper and just steward, but the gift becomes a blessing to others and to posterity.

This leads to the other truth in the evaluation of material things; namely, that the only real value is spiritual. The fullest use of what God gives is never achieved till we use it with the sense of stewardship.

The prosperous man in Jesus' parable wasn't condemned because he was prosperous. He just didn't see beyond his self-centered instincts in his prosperity. More barns—why? To eat, drink, and be merry. One doesn't need the insight of Jesus to know that that man is in a blind alley. Not only God Almighty but the conscience of every person would ask that man, "So what? What's the point of it all? Whose will these things be?"

There isn't a person reading these lines who doesn't have some material thing that has meaning because of the spirit that is associated with it.

I knew a woman in her nineties who wore a pearl pendant about her neck for seventy years. It was given to her by a man to whom her heart was indissolubly bound when both he and she were at adulthood's threshold. He died shortly after their engagement was an-

nounced. The pendant went with her to the grave—not a material thing, but a living symbol of love and of loyalty. Was it material? Yes, but it became something more. It had a spiritual meaning that gave it a preciousness it couldn't have had otherwise. And whose was it? Just hers? No, it was also the man's who gave it to her, and its loving guardianship made more tender the hearts of countless friends who came to know the story.

One of the early men in American history to endow what he possessed with a spiritual impact was Benjamin Franklin. Early in his career, he became what in his day was an extremely wealthy man. Being resourceful and competent, it was inevitable for him to become a man of substance. But he had another dimension that makes his influence felt to this day—in education, in thought, in science, in practical mechanics, and even in the defense against fire. And that stemmed from his wide and deep relationship to the timeless world of the spirit. Here and there you can still find a Franklin stove still giving heat and reminding us of one whose attitude endowed every moment with outgoing vitality of the mind. His was a spirit that was moved to serve and help in scientific, political, philosophical, and educational causes. His work shows enduring spiritual significance. This, to some extent, we all can achieve as we see our abilities and acquisitions through the eyes of the wise and dedicated steward.

In 1876, Thomas Huxley, in an American lecture tour, said, "I cannot say that I am in the slightest degree impressed by your bigness and your material resources as such. Size is not grandeur, and territory does not make

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a nation. The great issue, about which does hang a true sublimity and the terror of an overhanging fate, is what are you going to do with all these things?"

Individually and corporately, we are "on the beam" if we look upon the material things of life as God's giving, and if we use them with a spiritual purpose.

" . . . lo, I am with you alway. . . ."

MATTHEW 28:20

"Friendship can exist only where men harmonize in their views of things human and divine."

CICERO

V

MAN'S NEED FOR SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIP

I can't imagine a more consoling venture than one which sets out to discover the Jesus who spoke, as no other, to the deep wants in the heart of every man. How misunderstood He was and is! How often He seems far from the hurts, the hungers, the ambitions, and the sighs of folk like us!

For many, both within and without the Christian communion, he's like some fine instrument placed in the attic. The instrument that once sang with life is surrounded with discarded furniture and hidden by cobwebs. It is antiquated. What use can it have in the lives of people who have given themselves over to the enjoyment of television, radio, and record player?

Whenever I come to the high seasons of the church year, such as Christmas or Easter, a number of people,

both young and old, confront me with their troubling questions about Christ. The ancient dogmas lack meaning. Christmas poses the problem of the virgin birth, which is a stumbling block for some sincere seekers. Easter opens up the matter of the resurrection with its perplexities for many a mind.

What is the relationship between the physical and the spiritual? How can God, which is Spirit, impregnate a woman to conceive a child? How can a dead man rise from the tomb and ascend into heaven? Such questions many honest men ask, and they are reluctant to enter closely into the Church of Christ.

But many another man easily accepts Jesus as the Christ. There is no problem for him in saying, "born of the Virgin Mary—ascended into heaven." He repeats that ancient formula with a sweet and untroubled faith. No questions for him! No problems at all!

Yet another devotee bows, in the hush of a darkened sanctuary, before an effigy in a niche, lights a candle, whispers a prayer. Then he turns to his task, whatever it may be, as to a lower plane of existence. He passes back into a mundane life so far withdrawn from that mysterious one where he knelt before the statue of the High Priest, sitting in ineffable majesty at the right hand of the Lord God Almighty.

Let every man honor another's faith! We should treat with caution and respect every man's path to trust and adoration. It is one of the deepest of all spiritual adventures to come to a reckoning with the eternal Christus—exalted above angels and archangels.

But there is a human side to Jesus too. There is a tender, practical ministry He has that few can question

and all of us need to know. This side of Jesus is sometimes hidden by the creeds and credences, the incense and incantations. It is my purpose here to tell you that He was and *is* the warmest, strongest, the wisest, the most perfect man that breathed this air that you and I breathe—that walked, and continues to walk, the ways you and I must walk. He is a man who, surpassing all others in human history, has spoken and acted relevantly—*so relevantly*—to our deepest and most urgent needs.

Look at our need for spiritual friendship. See how Jesus—by what He said and did, and by the spirit that emanated and continues to emanate from Him—fulfills that need at the deepest level.

You sense your strong need for and response to guidance of such friendship as you skim through the varied materials in the Old Testament. There, you find wisdom, history, songs, philosophy, drama, biography, and prophecy. Amid this lavish literary and spiritual feast, what captures your heart? Where would you like to stop and savor a particular piece? If you feel as most of us do, it will be at some of the moving stories of friendship, like that of Eli, the aged one,¹ and young Samuel, or David and Jonathan.

Said Jeremy Taylor, "Some friendships are made by nature, some by contract, some by interests, and then some by souls."

Made by souls is the heart-stirring friendship of David and Jonathan.² How indelible is the picture of David, the herdsman. Having fought Goliath, he comes slowly toward his monarch's tent, with the enemy's gory head in one hand, his sling in the other. He appears to be more fearful before King Saul and his court than he

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had been before the fearsome giant he has just slain. Jonathan, the king's son, watches it all. He might so easily have burned with rage and envy. But his soul "was knit with the soul of David." Across the ensuing years, until those ties of mutual affection were only partly broken by death, there was a bond, surer than the love of parent and child. Is there anyone who will not say, "Such a friendship touches deep longings within me"?

Look at the scene of Ruth and Naomi. Listen to these words: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."³ Is there anyone who doesn't find that beautiful loyalty caressing the finer part of his heart? And does it not whisper of a tender and elemental desire that makes us respond, "I wish I had a friend like that."

Emerson wrote of this level of friendship in these words: "For aid and comfort through all the relations and passages of life and death . . . fit for serene days and graceful gifts, and country rambles, but also for rough roads and hard fare, shipwreck, poverty and persecution."⁴ My spirit needs, as does yours, the assurance that can come not alone from such a friendship, but that comes from one that provides final support on the soul's quest.

Jesus ministers to that need in countless ways, as He is portrayed in the New Testament. To those who love and serve Him, He affirms that He will be the greatest friend. Time and time again, not only in words, but also in actions, He repeats the thought, You are my friends.⁵ The last recorded words He ever spoke show that un-

changing purpose to be a friend who never fails—"Lo, I am with you always." ⁶

One translation puts it, "Lo, I am with you all of the days." Not just now and then, but always. It is a human sentiment He is expressing. His desire is not alone to be at the right hand of God, but earnestly and lovingly to be with us all our days.

Those words tell us that no joy can you know, or pain, no success or failure, but He knows too. No vale of despair or loneliness can you tread, but He has been there. He knows. He understands. He is related to everything that can happen to you or to me.

Have you ever heard Jesus described as having a wonderful sense of humor? As a man who loved having fun? He did! He laughed and participated in the whole cycle of life with full-hearted enjoyment. He entered so happily into the frolicsome times of weddings and village festivals that His critics labeled Him a glutton and a wine-bibber.⁷

As you read the fragments of His teaching in the New Testament, you can almost hear people roaring with laughter or chuckling with a subtle delight. For example, He told the story of a man who was picayunishly pointing out the tiny splinter in his brother's eye—when all the time he had a gigantic beam in his own.⁸

When He portrayed a camel trying to get through the eye of a needle, He was using high humor.⁹ The "eye of a needle" was a small gate cut near the base of the wall that protected a city. It was probably made for emergency purposes, and it would take much hunching and squeezing for the ungainly camel to possibly crawl

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through. That awkward animal, trying to wiggle and grunt through the eye of a needle presented a ludicrous picture to men of the Middle East.

He, I'm sure, chuckled with His listeners, as He said the rich man can face like difficulties in entering the kingdom of heaven.

His life wasn't, of course, all gaiety. Yet a full portraiture must show Him laughing and loving life—entering with verve into its opportunities for pleasure and relaxation.

Think of Him as seeking to be with you! That's what He said He wanted to do: "Lo, I am with you all of the days." In your recreation, let Him find a place. It may be more meaningful still if He is with you there.

What a balanced, what a richly varied life was His! Yes, He was a man who prayed, but He was a man of action too, admired for His courage and the strength of His speech. He cultivated times for rest and quiet musing. He entered into the flow of community as well as individual life. The herdsman and the soldier, the sage and the sinner, the matron and the maid, the prattling child and the aged one who knew that night was near—He entered into the concerns and the hopes of them all.

He understood the human psyche as it has never been known in all history. And, in His personal suffering and selfless death, He went farther than anyone into the darkest valleys of human trial. He is the one man in all time of whom the sufferer wracked with pains or the sinner bowed in remorse can say, "This I know. Jesus understands."

Does He understand just some of the time? No, He

understands all of the days. In the gladness of birth, it is good to think of His spirit with us then, joining in the joy. In the poignancy of sorrow, too—yes, all of the days.

Recently, I came across a letter kept from the war days of 1944. It was from a young soldier in our armies in Europe. He was describing the town of Dieppe, France: "I've seen the coast with its barbed wire, its hidden forts, the iron barriers. I've visited the cemetery where are buried over eight hundred Canadian soldiers who lost their lives in the mad assault on this natural fortress. So many crosses said 'Unknown.' . . ."

As I read that letter, my heart went out in questioning—eight hundred Canadian boys? Then there were eight hundred families notified of this terribly personal and crushing loss. Eight hundred homes where hearts were bruised and where walls heard choking sobs through long hours of darkness. What sorrow greater? What agony could be darker? Who could understand? Who could share? Where was there a friend who could assuage?

There is one! Yes, one who could say, "I do understand. I've been there and deeper still. I am with you all of the days."

In a parish, such as the one to which I minister, the Sunday bulletin frequently carries the names of members of the church who have died in the past days. Their names appear not only in honor to their memory, but to call all parishioners to remember them and their families with love and sympathy and prayer. I think, now and then, as I read those names and look out over those assembled for worship, that in time every name will appear before the congregation. The scope of life is

limited. The years allotted to each become less and less. In threescore years and ten, none of the many who may be at worship now, except a tiny handful of the youngest, will be present.

Then I ask myself, What are we going to do with the years, or days, or weeks, or months that are left? How can they be lived with greater dignity and joy and constructive impact on our times? How can we be adequate for what the shifting tides of the hours will bring?

Then I see the relevance of the quest to know the guidance that Jesus of Nazareth gives. I know that none of us can get through the years without help. We each, at one time or another, will cry out for comfort, for guidance, for love, and for the support of deep friendship. As we know Jesus, love Him, let Him stand with us, we can grow in the strength we need for life's hard inevitables, and the rate of that growth increases as He is accepted as the friend who will be with us all of the days.

The guidance of His friendship is particularly helpful as we deal with our faults, our flaws, our mistakes, our sins.

"I am not come," He said, "to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."¹⁰ He showed a quality that Aristotle described as "incapable of being disturbed by accusation."

With those not well known to us we rightly caution ourselves against arguing about two topics: religion and politics. Yet how vital these subjects are. To argue may be fruitless. But the sharing of thought and conviction is a means to growth and understanding. It is right and well to ask honest questions and to state a sincere position. But yet how easily misunderstandings run rampant

and accusation is made! How important in a society such as ours to manifest a spirit that will not create accusation and will not be disturbed by it.

In Jesus Christ you have a constant counselor whose sympathy seeks not to decry your faults, but to rid you of your guilt. He understands. He didn't come to condemn—He came to save. He knows you better than you know yourself. He's always loved you, He always will. Now, He says, let's get this thing straightened out. Be freed from your fears. But then, sin no more! Now let's go on more closely together.¹¹

Of course, as with a physical relationship, this spiritual relationship needs to be given attention to reach its fullest flower. It needs to be cultivated.

Recently, in one of the byroads of reading, I became interested in the decisive battle of Cressy, from which fourteenth-century England emerged as a great military power. Cressy was a major fulcrum, moving Britain on to her subsequent role in Western history. It was fascinating to learn that the English were successful at Cressy because they had learned, from the Welsh wars, the merit of the longbow. As the French charged, the English archers, placed in positions flanking the men in arms, used the longbows with devastating effectiveness. Those advancing with the old crossbows fell by the hundreds in the field, without being able to reach the men in arms.

But these mechanical details took second place before an incident of moving valor. The blind king of Bohemia with a little cluster of faithful knights forced themselves through the barrage of arrows. They, who might have retreated under the fierce barrage, but did

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not, were cut down to the last man with their beloved king. For a moment, amid the brilliant strategics of the battle and the horror of the slaughter, this moment of gallantry and friendship was pinpointed with light.

What kept those men together? What brought them to the point where deflection from their king was impossible? We can be sure that their fealty of spirit and nobility of action did not happen suddenly as they began the charge. There had been years of standing together, thinking together, planning together, fighting together. There had been years of association, developed through understanding and respect for one another.

We find grandeur in our lives as we, in similar fashion, cultivate our spiritual relationship with Jesus of Nazareth, the man. Study His life! Listen to His sayings! Know His spirit! See Him as desiring to become a companion to you, a friend. When you don't know which way to turn, He can give, as no other, quiet to your rest, dimension to your love, dignity and competence to your vocation, and a quality of comfort that none other can provide. His wisdom can be with you. His balance, His support, if sought and cultivated, can give you the finest security of mind and soul.

I do not minimize the theological problems and questions which surround Jesus Christ. But they take for a time a peripheral place as we seek Him and come to know Him as the Friend.

"And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured. . . ."

MATTHEW 17:18

"Demons are everywhere, and the cursing of them is universal."

TERTULLIAN

VI

MAN'S NEED TO RESIST EVIL

Come with me to observe an incident that takes place in a New York apartment overlooking Central Park. The year is 1960. The woman, who lives in the exquisitely appointed rooms, has had a history of alcoholism. She is sober, but trembling, as she speaks to her pastor who has come to help her. She can't re-enter her bedroom because the "evil creatures" are there again. They are about her bed, and even with her eyes closed she sees their slimy bodies and malevolent eyes as they hang from the cornices and lurk in the corners. If she does go in, she says, the devils will drive her to madness by their ugliness and vileness.

(The clergyman who told me this story is a man of balance and maturity, the spiritual leader of one of the leading New York churches. He has studied both psychology and theology. Early in his career he had counsel-

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ing experience with individuals who were mentally degraded and emotionally distressed.)

The minister opens the door of the frightful room. He enters and, in a strong voice, commands: "Oh, dark ones, in the name of Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, depart from here and never return!"

The woman tremulously enters the room. She smiles in unbelief. Tears fall from her eyes as she cries, "Oh, thank God, they're gone! Those vile things in the corner and the ones above my bed, too. Yes, they're all gone." Following a prayer, a few words of encouragement, and the departure of her pastor, she falls into an untroubled sleep.

Now what will you say of this incident that I have retold as simply and seriously as I heard it told? Is it a lot of hocus-pocus?

Before you laugh the story away, ask the minister what he thinks of it. He will say to you, "I believe very deeply in the force and the malignancy of evil in this world. More, I believe that modern man must give it much more heed than he has."

"Well," you might ask, "wasn't the woman soon back to her bottle and seeing more booby-creatures?"

"Let me answer this way," the minister replies. "First, I can attest to the fact that she seemed to be obsessed by some evil force, if you'll permit me to use those words. Secondly, after my intervention she appeared freed from what I call a demonically degrading influence. Thirdly, this incident occurred two years ago and there has been no further major trouble with alcohol."

I ask you to concern yourself with this matter of

evil because I also feel that there is a real need for us to face up more realistically to the presence and power of it. We have a greater need to guard against evil powers than we are likely to acknowledge.

One place to begin with this, as with any questionable matter, is in the Bible itself. What does the New Testament say about evil? I haven't read any finer summary than that by one of the most competent Biblical scholars of the nineteenth century, W. O. E. Oesterley.¹ After his careful study of demonology in the New Testament, he came up with a number of points which I condense: (1) Demons are! (2) They are under one head who is Satan. (3) Under Satan the demons form a kingdom. (4) They are incorporeal and generally, though not necessarily, they are not visible. (5) They inhabit certain places which they prefer to other places. (6) They tend to live in groups. (7) They are the cause of mental and physical disease to men and women and children. (8) They can pass in and out of men and animals. (9) Christ made it His end to overthrow the kingdom of Satan and set up His own in its place. (10) He cast out demons by His name or by His word. (11) Christ could delegate this power. (12) That power was regarded in human history as something new. (13) He did not treat those who were possessed of the demon as always being sinners, though sinfulness was fertile soil in which evil influences could take root. (14) The divine nature of Christ was recognized by the demons who feared Him. (15) At Christ's second coming, all the denizens of this kingdom are condemned to eternal fire.

This is a crystallization of a vastly complex and widely varied series of instances in which Satan and

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the demonic forces are mentioned in the New Testament.

Now you can probe these statements and question them. You can say, "Well, the New Testament contains, doesn't it, only fragments of Jesus' teachings and acts?"

"Yes," any careful student would have to say, "that's probably true."

You go on, "Isn't it true that those who wrote down the words and acts of Jesus often didn't fully understand what He did or what He said?"

"Yes, that is an assumption that is probably correct in some instances, though in this area of treatment of demons the reports are clearly understandable."

You go on, "Therefore, what you have is a document highly colored by the prevailing attitude and outlook of that time and place in man's history."

The scholar would have to reply, "From the present information we possess, your statement is in keeping with our known facts."

But there are other stubborn facts no questioner can overlook. One is the sheer number of instances in the New Testament where demons and evil spirits are referred to.² The evil powers are confronted by Jesus.³ He took the force of Satan seriously. He freed individuals who were possessed by demons.⁴ He constantly set His face toward the subjugation of the kingdom of Satan.

Not only will the numerous instances where demons are mentioned give the reader pause; there is an intensity of concern which one feels most particularly in the ministry of Jesus.

If you treat indifferently the Biblical references to demonology, you cut out some of the most revelatory

insights into the inner life of Jesus himself—such as that instance of the temptation when He confronted the devil ⁵ as He considered the way of His public ministry —“Get thee behind me, Satan.” His life was to be freed from Satan’s taint. His power was to be triumphant constantly over the legions of the devil.

You can interpret the temptation symbolically or you can try to read it as a psychological struggle in the inner man. But no matter how you do it, you must sense the reality of a struggle. There was good against bad, light against darkness; there was a prolonged and exhausting torment of the spiritual, or the power of good, locked in conflict with the power of evil.

Further, those who bypass the references to Satan and his minions emasculate the New Testament of some of its most potent warnings and its most definite and colorful teachings. Gone will be such vital and practical counsel as that from the Epistle of James: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” ⁶

From the First Book of Peter will be lost the powerful words: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” ⁷ From the Gospel of John will be gone the firm-minded and realistic insight: “The devil is a liar, and the father of it.” ⁸

If you, a twentieth-century urbane, sophisticated person, have been bland or casual about demonology, I plead, as Jesus did, for a recognition of the power of evil. But, added to this, doesn’t our own personal and corporate history in this modern world give us pause to *consider the forcefulness of evil*? Don’t throw out a dark but basic fact of life because you may not happen to respond to

the symbology and language of the past that's been used to describe it.

In 1642 a fascinating book, *Religio Medici*, by Sir Thomas Browne, expressed the thought, "The heart of man is the place the devil's in: I feel sometimes a hell within myself."

Who can be indifferent or casual about the force of evil when he may have struggled, as we all have, with *what* to do? Or agonized with remorse at what he *did* do? Or wept at what he *did not* do? Wasn't he standing, when he did, with Thomas Browne?

A woman who sought my counsel, tremulous with fear, told me of a "hell" within herself. A man I know has a vicious temper, which has caused him "hellish" agony and remorse. He will tell you that his temper makes him "feel like a man possessed!"

And what will we say of an almost unbelievably horrible drama, three hundred years after Browne wrote his *Religio Medici*, when, under Hitler, six million human beings were deliberately exterminated? I have seen, on the Israeli side of Jerusalem, a fearsome museum showing bars of soap made from human bodies and documents covered with human skin taken from victims of the Gestapo gas chambers. What words can describe it but *hellish, fiendish, demonic*?⁹ What language is more apt than that which says, "The spirit that caused men to do these satanic things was spawned in Hell"?

From the Biblical material and from testimony of psychics and sensitives I cannot rule out the idea of the devil or evil as an external force. We know, indeed, the inner results of evil. But though we may not see it with the physical eye, has not everyone known "atmospheres"

that have exerted evil claims and downward-pulling influences?

Viewing what individual man or corporate men can do and become almost calls us, it seems to me, to repeat the thought of Cotton Mather, the vigorous American preacher, who cried out in his pulpit in 1692 in Boston, "That there is a devil is a thing doubted not but by those that are under the influence of the devil. For any to deny the being of a devil must be from an ignorance or a profaneness worse than diabolical." ¹⁰

Something akin to that sobering affirmation, from the time of witchcraft trials, can be detected from the updated field of psychical research. We are told that there is a race inheritance in the depths of each man's psyche, and that the hidden self is not completely a spirit of goodness and light. The fear and harshness of the lonely caveman hunter, the compiled inhumanity of the human race in its total history, is lurking in our depths.

This makes me want to say that the man who commutes from a suburb in Westchester, New York, to 42nd Street, and who feels himself to be civilized and urbane, would do well to be aware of that part of his being that can easily be stirred to brutality, to viciousness, to degradation. That part belongs more closely to his real nature than the superficial courtesies he engages in, and he needs to do something about it.

What do you do with evil forces? What safeguards can be exerted to control demonic power? Here are three suggestions: Prayer, resistance, affirmation.

Prayer keeps the vessel of the spirit clean and filled so there is no place or room for evil. Fill your heart, at the day's beginning, with thoughts that are pure and

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honorable and hopeful. Touch the hem of God's perfection. Standing in His presence, set your mind on constructive intentions for the day. Right away the dark power of surliness can be eliminated from your face and from your words.

Jesus affirmed that some of the demons that possessed men could be controlled only by fasting, discipline, and prayer.¹¹

That renunciation of physical concerns, which is suggested by fasting—holding the body under—and the regular discipline of aligning one's mind and heart with God, brings the angelic forces close and holds the demons away. Few are the cultures and few the religions in all human history that have not called men to that spiritual discipline. And each has demonstrated that evil retreats as the area of godly purposes is enlarged in a man's consciousness.

Prayer brings a more benign force into our lives. I don't find it difficult to believe that our sincere prayers bring angelic forces, good spirits, and powers nearer, and make them stronger, more vigorous. Why not call them by their names: Peace, Courage, Hope, Wisdom, Kindness, Charity, and Love. Those angels bring light into us and about us—a light from which demons always will shrink away. Pray!

Secondly, *rebuke* evil! ¹² Don't tempt it, don't stir it up, don't pamper it! Don't "horse around" with the devil!

Take an altogether different position from Pat, who, in the classic story, was on his deathbed. The priest asked, "Pat, will you renounce the devil and all his

works?" Pat replied, "Father, in the condition I'm in, I don't think I should antagonize anybody."

Don't compromise yourself with Satan! The Biblical insight and teaching is at the opposite pole. Be definite! Be strongly opposed to the beginning of some enslaving habit. Dig in your heels against some lower tendency that makes itself felt in your speech or attitude. Immediately stand against a hardness that wasn't there before, an inclination to become sour, or negative, or bitter—"Get thee hence, Satan." Rebuke the devil! "You loathsome thing, be gone! No home for you will be found here!"

Many a destructive tendency or a potentially dangerous habit can be handled by a decisive No, or some similar form of sharp opposition. The bank teller, caught after years of stealing, should have rebuked the devil that whispered one day, "Take those few dollars. It won't be missed. You're underpaid. It's your due." He failed in the practice Jesus cultivated: Rebuking the devil.

There is a Welsh proverb that says, "The devil has three children: pride, falsehood, and envy." One could go on adding to the list. How about anger, lust, greed? The only way these are kept from courting and perhaps winning us into their dangerous camp is to command them away at first appearance.

Pray! Rebuke! Then *affirm God's power* in the world and in your life.

The ancient Jew was confident that repeating his great profession of faith was a shield in warding off the devil: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:

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And thou shalt love the Lord thy God. . . ." ¹³ The thought was that the repetition of God's name, the Almighty, the Holy One, not alone affirmed a power greater than Satan, but brought that power close. In the medieval period it was thought that the making of the sign of the cross, a symbol of Christ's purity and holiness, assisted in the task. Why? Because falsehood cannot live before truth, sinfulness before purity. Evil is overcome by good. ¹⁴

You and I can demonstrate this in a hundred ways. The little child's fear will not grow into evil if it is overcome by the parents' courage and gentle teaching. And the suspicious attitude someone has will not develop into hatred if it is overcome by friendliness and responsibility. It is never evil that overcomes evil—only its opposite, that which is good. The greatest force of all to control evil is the sovereign power of Almighty God. God is light. Light is the final power that can dissolve darkness.

What a vast subject! I hope you feel it's an intriguing one—one you ought to come to terms with. No, let me make it stronger. We *need* to come to terms with evil—we *must*—for strong and healthy living.

There is a great Christian affirmation that can be a powerful amulet for you to ward off the forces of Satan. It is to say with Paul, "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." ¹⁵

This I know: If you say these words and let the

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thought they express come into the apex of your confidence, it can then be said, as it has been said for hundreds of years, that "the hosts from the kingdom of evil will stay away from your path."

" . . . Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

MATTHEW 4:10

"The mind, grappling with great aims and wrestling with mighty impediments, grows by a certain necessity to the stature of greatness." WILLIAM C. BRYANT

VII

MAN'S NEED TO MAKE RIGHT CHOICES

The traveler who journeys from Jordan's capital city, Amman, toward Jerusalem sees, near Jericho, a high and parched plateau. This is the Judean plateau, a rocky elevation with a stark and ominous impact upon the senses. Rising slightly above it is the Mount of Temptation. When I saw it late one afternoon in wintertime, it loomed dark and inhospitable above Jericho and the Dead Sea. This was the place where Jesus spent forty days and nights in quiet thought and active struggle to determine the aim and the method of His public ministry. As I saw that sobering upward reach of the earth's surface, I recalled the portentous and deeply human experience of Jesus at the temptation.

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The Gospels of Matthew and Luke record that Satan confronted Jesus with three temptations. The response of Jesus to these temptations can help you and me to develop a positive and confident attitude.

The first temptation was to make bread out of stones.¹ What does this mean? Obviously Jesus had a sense of great power—intellectual, physical, spiritual power. The record of His life reveals that He controlled forces for intellectual, spiritual, and physical healing that no one since has been fully able to retap.

He was now trying to determine how most effectively to use that power in His life. He was aware that He could use it to fill man's physical needs. Why not make bread out of stones? Jesus must have been hungry. The forty days were over. Here was an easy way to get food. Broadly interpreted, the temptation for Jesus was to use His power for the satisfaction of immediate needs. Jesus rejected this. He sought a more constructive purpose for His power.

The second temptation was to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple to prove that (the devil himself quoted the Scripture) "He [God] shall give his angels charge concerning thee; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."²

What was this temptation? It was a challenge, a voice, an idea (explain it however you will) coming into Jesus' consciousness, suggesting He use His power to gain attention from other people. It could be done by magic working, by miraculous signs. He rejected this too, as He rejected, in the course of His ministry, all requests that variously asked, "Give us some sign."³ Make water

turn to fire! Jump off the temple! Turn stones into bread!

The third temptation was to seek material and political power.⁴ This was a particularly subtle temptation, for Jesus knew of His people's passion to tear off the shackles of Rome. To put Himself in the position of seeking political power for the freeing of the Hebrews could be a very worthy aim. Had not Moses walked into immortality through dedication to that aim? But Jesus responded by saying, "Get thee hence, Satan," or, as Matthew puts it, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

Standing there looking at the Mount of Temptation, I recalled that the temptation is interpreted in various ways.⁵

One is a literal interpretation. There was an awful but real demonic physical figure appearing to Jesus and speaking to Him. This is the record, with slight variations, in the two accounts by Matthew and Luke.

A second interpretation is that this is a symbolic account. Jesus told the story in this pictorial fashion when He talked intimately to His disciples about His intellectual and emotional struggles. The parabolic or symbolic form made the account more vivid, easier to remember. Those mental questions and conflicts at the beginning of His mission were frightfully strong. It was a terribly real struggle that was intertwined with the very roots of His soul. He wanted the disciples to know what a shaking experience it really was. Should He give a sign? Should He use His power for immediate ends? Should He make political ambition and material strength His aims?

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Another interpretation is that here is recorded Jesus' psychological dealing with Himself. Here is revealed how He sifted out basic judgments and feelings that would be controlling attitudes in His life. Here is revealed, in confession, how one man, who lived successfully and victoriously, excluded certain attitudes which He saw would be short-term, or destructive—and certainly limited in their ultimate worth. He excluded the attitude that demanded immediate results, that found satisfaction in feeding one's ego through a flamboyant impressing of people. He withdrew from the feeling that pampering one's pride was a constructive aim. He voted against the insinuation that material power or success leads to the greatest good.

In my judgment, it is a secondary matter as to which interpretation a man takes. But I do think, as with so many incidents in the life of Christ, that there is a meaning that is vital for meeting the everlasting needs of men. This is the thing of first importance. *How* and *when* and *who* are the husks around a living kernel of experience that Jesus wanted to be helpful to our living today. Thus, whether you take the account literally or symbolically or spiritually, it is essential to feel and understand that Jesus was dealing with His own attitude. When we look at the Mount of Temptation with this in mind, we can learn how the wrong attitudes are controlled and the right ones made dominant in our lives, as they were in the life of Jesus.

William James said the greatest discovery of his generation was that a man could alter his life by altering his attitudes. Looking back on the temptation experience, we can certainly say that had Jesus permitted the

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attitudes of self-seeking, egotism, and materialism to dominate His mind, He undoubtedly would have been a successful man, a man of note. But He would have been unknown, unloved, and unhonored after His time.

In the temptation experience, the direction of His mind, His spirit, and His subsequent ministry were set by what He accepted and what He rejected.

This ought to say something obvious to us, something which needs underlining: It is the attitudes we plant in our minds that determine the course of our lives.

Take the attitude of inferiority: If you say of yourself, "I really am not a particularly good person nor really capable," and if you let that feeling take the upper hand, you experience fatigue and failure and depression.

Similarly, if you accept the tempter's call to be jealous or filled with self-pity, you will end up feeling despondent. But if you alter the picture and say what Jesus was saying, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and show confidence, patience, and tolerance, doesn't there issue out of that attitude energy and security and happiness? Don't both physical health and spiritual virility follow like the dawn the dark?

You say, "I can see this up to a point. But it is awfully easy for you, writing in some quiet place, to forget how hard it is really to control one's feelings. Depressive and negative attitudes do come to me. Some of my day-by-day experiences make me cynical and suspicious and impatient, and I don't care for the result, be it irritability, tension, or worry. So if you find anything in this temptation experience that can help me, then make it speak to me."

How can one better control the influence of those

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ideas that create wrong attitudes? There are, I'm convinced, some down-to-earth suggestions in the account of the temptation. Of course, they have to be incorporated into your life before they do any good. But they are there, and they can be helpful if you will accept and put to use the help they offer.

One of them is that Jesus must have practiced continuously the injunction, *Let your mind and heart set watchmen over your thoughts and feelings*. Our checking account, our savings, our investments are surveyed with care at regular intervals. If there is any error, it is noted immediately and the correction is made. Do you exert similar care over the images, concepts, impulses, thoughts, that come into your mind, that stir your emotions?

Jesus did something like this, I'm sure. He screened ideas and thoughts with great care. The withered and tainted, He discarded. He was doing just that when He said, "Get thee behind me, Satan." There was a definite holding away, a pushing outside of Himself, of those attitudes that would cause a debilitation of His highest self.

Every one of us can do more than we do in putting a sensitive "electric eye" over the thoughts we have, the springlike attitudes that flow into rivers of emotion that will set the channels of our action. But it takes attention and discipline to exclude unworthy attitudes.

A mother I know is cultivating such attention and discipline. She said, "When my children become obnoxious and their actions bring me to the verge of angry words and actions, I immediately put in my mind a picture of them at their best. I think of them not as they

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are, or as they'll likely become, but as they can be at their best. Then, calming down because of my thought, I approach them with an altogether different and finer spirit."

This method of self-development is a form of auto-conditioning. It is an approach to the discipline practiced by Jesus: awareness of the problem, silence and aloneness, firm command ("Get thee hence, Satan"), and the supplanting of lower attitudes by higher ones.

Then note, too, that Jesus used the wisdom of the past to help meet what, at the moment, was a trying experience. In answer to each temptation, He responded with quotations from Scripture. In the instance of turning stones into bread, He referred to Deuteronomy 8:3, where is recorded how the Israelites were fed manna from heaven in the wilderness after they fled from the slavery in Egypt. The teaching was clear that man does not live by bread alone and that he finds his deepest nourishment through God, who is the author of all things.⁶

To the second temptation He responded by saying, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord." That is a literal quotation from Deuteronomy 6:16, where Moses advocates that the people treat God with profound respect and that they be wary of stirring God's anger or tempting Him to vengeance.⁷

Jesus' response to the last temptation, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve" comes from a number of sources—from Deuteronomy, from Joshua, and I Samuel.⁸

Jesus reveals a great familiarity with the Scriptures. But it is more than familiarity. He quotes accurately and

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aply. There had been such study and rumination over the ancient words of counsel that there was an understanding, an appreciation, a love for them. He had, for years, made them guides for His thought and action, and He was doing in the temptation what was habitual with Him. In the questioning and temptation of "now" He turned to the spiritual treasury of His people.

Yes, He must have lived with those thoughts. He had not just learned them by rote as a boy back in Nazareth. He had not let them fade out of His memory and thinking. He held and treasured and repeated them.

I'm of the opinion that Jesus, by what He did here, is trying to teach and help us. Certainly it is important to cherish and cultivate any wisdom we have garnered in our pilgrimage of life. Mature men and women want to get this across to young people. We preach to them, "Take the good concepts your parents try to give you. Keep that ideal picture of yourself you've gained from teachers and counselors. Don't get away from the teachings of your church or the high principles you've learned from great minds and fine literature. Keep these. Save them. Savor them. They are a mental and spiritual treasure. They will hold you up and help you out at tough and decisive times."

But why exclude ourselves, as adults, from the picture? Jesus was thirty years of age at the temptation. Our need is greater than His to keep our lives on an even keel. We can profit by a discipline comparable to that of the devotee in the Himalayas who turns the prayer wheel. Don't be afraid of the mechanical aspect. Do it regularly. Refresh yourself with the Bible's wisdom and any words of light and loveliness that were meaningful to

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you. They reinforce the sinews of attitude for life's tempting times.

Note, too, that Jesus surrounded Himself with men who were faithful. Being human, this may have failed to be dependable at times. But they believed in Him. They were optimistic and gave Him their loyalty, attention, and enthusiasm.

There is the instance of a little girl of twelve supposedly being dead.⁹ Woebegone messengers came to tell her father and Jesus that the little girl had died. When Jesus entered the room where the child lay, the first thing He did was to put out the official wailers. Then He took with Him Peter and James and John to the pallet where the once laughing girl lay pale and still. Why did He take them along?

The answer is very clear to me: They believed in Him. Their trusting attitude and confident spirit supported and empowered Him. The atmosphere of deadly hopelessness and despair, created by the weepers, vanished. With their trust upholding Him, Jesus could reach the sleeping mind of the little girl. He said to her with delicate tenderness, "*Talitha cumi.*"¹⁰ *Talitha* is an affectionate and intimate name from the Aramaic, meaning something like, "my little gazelle." *Cumi* means "arise." "My little gazelle, arise." And she did!

The fascinating thing is not so much that the girl got up but that Jesus apparently felt the necessity of having an untroubled atmosphere. He needed men who could buttress the attitude, "It can be done. It will."

Any effort to associate with individuals of strong and constructive attitude, whether living or dead, whether they speak from pulpit or stage or out of a great book, does us good. They help us to resist destructive

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attitudes and to provide conditions for effective fulfillment of constructive attitudes.

Of course the deepest clue to this whole matter is in the concept of loving, worshiping, and serving God with a singleness of purpose. Herein is the sustaining secret of Jesus' courage, compassion, and wisdom. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."¹¹ That central conviction sustained Him in the temptation experience. It was a conviction that dominated His mind. It is His final reliance at the end, when there is an even deeper temptation than on the wilderness height above Jericho. The cardinal thought is the one He whispers in Gethsemane, "Thy will be done."¹²

I can imagine someone saying, "This is an up-in-the-clouds concept which has nothing to do with my life of keeping up with faulty heating systems, meeting pressing mortgage payments, tolerating incompetent servicemen, catching the eight-four A.M. train, and struggling constantly with innumerable pressures and problems."

I wonder! The more I observe the results of push and pressure, the more I'm convinced that this may be the most relevant matter we can think about. The idea of God, of His eternity, of His truth, of His wide love, brings a solace and perspective that can be found no other way. In quietness, to know that you are most deeply related to God's eternity, truth, and love is to be on the path to peace and power.

The sense of worshiping and serving God—putting Him in the center of your life—is a matter of prime importance. I'm convinced it can do for us what it did for Jesus—help us to put wrong attitudes aside with dispatch, and to make secure the foundations of our lives.

" . . . he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."
MATTHEW 24:13

"It is the character of a brave and resolute man not to be ruffled by adversity and not to desert his post."
CICERO

VIII

MAN'S NEED FOR ENDURANCE

It often happens that we cannot get the totality of some thought or feeling by stating it simply. To be understood in its total meaning such a thought or feeling may have to be stated paradoxically.

Here is a familiar example, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry." The same paradox is found in the Russian proverb: "Pray to the Lord, but keep rowing for the shore." Trust and prayer have their place, and so do reminders of worldly caniness and physical exertion. Each ingredient is needed for a successful recipe for living. But where does one draw the line between self-reliance and trust in God? I do not know. I am confident, however, that Jesus' teachings are vastly helpful on this score. Three separate ideas of His can speak tellingly on this complex matter.

One is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father

which is in heaven is perfect." ¹ Another is, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." ² If these seem mystical and lofty in their spirituality, the third is the practical word, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." ³

Look carefully at these thoughts. The Christian must measure up to what some have called a completely ridiculous and impossible standard, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Is it impossible? Is it foolish because it is unattainable? Before you answer with a quick yea or nay, think of one side of your nature, so easily neglected in the daily business of living. You are a body. But generations of wise men and the sensibilities within you attest that you are more. You are a soul.

Among Hindu writings is this affirmation of Lord Krishna: ⁴

*End and beginning are dreams!
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth
the spirit forever.*

The idea is that the soul possessed by every man is on an endless sojourn. That eternal part of us comes from the realm of infinity. It has a knowledge of the spirit world, where what man conceives as impossible ideals are the substance of life. It is to that realm, where there is the light of perfection, that the spirit returns after its brief residence in our mortal bodies.

Whether or not you can accept easily the dictum "be ye perfect," the very fact that you respond to excellence gives evidence of the spirit within. Is there not a

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need in man to move toward a higher level of attainment? Isn't there a need in us to be stirred and challenged by the seemingly impossible, the exalted, the perfect? If it isn't there, some of the verve that marks our human life at its best is gone. Some of the soul-light is dimmed.

Isn't there an awesome appeal that attracts the mind, the soul, the body of man in those words, "Be ye perfect"? Isn't the call to resolution, to set oneself with perseverance toward the heights, a spur to what is deepest in your nature?

As for the possibility of mankind achieving perfection, why not believe in that as the ultimate goal? This creative man, with such a brief existence on this old planet, has moved far in standing upright, in dreaming dreams and seeing their accomplishment. Why should he not have the vision of the perfect man, achieving, with others who have struggled upward toward that goal, the perfect society? The pyramid once lay locked in a quarry. It would be impossible to build a monument as the visionary Pharaoh imagined it. But the dream became fact.

"Man will never fly." That was the verdict of the majority.

"It is impossible to find a filament that will hold the light of electricity to make an incandescent lamp." So the pronouncement was made to Thomas Edison.

But there was what Longfellow called, in *Kéramos*, . . . the divine

*Insanity of noble minds,
That never falters nor abates,
But labors and endures and waits,*

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*Till all that it foresees it finds,
Or what it cannot find creates.*

The Parthenon proudly crowning the heights above Athens, airplanes in every sky, lights on thousands of streets and in millions of homes—these attest to man's capacity for progress and achievement. And the ineradicable yearning within each man to know, to grow, to understand, adds its convincing voice. What lesser goal than "be ye perfect" is worthy of the final aspiration of such a creature?

To this need in man, Jesus was speaking when He said, "I am the way" and "He that endureth to the end shall be saved." There is a strange unity, as there is complexity and also power, in the three ideas: "Be ye perfect"—"I am the way"—"He that endureth." You could take these three ideas and make them the foundation of a complete philosophy for both now and eternity. They strike the chord of man's need for the exalted, the seemingly unattainable. The method of achievement is suggested. Jesus will be guard and guide for anyone setting himself on the perilous conquest. Then comes the demanding counsel, "You must keep at it," as a final reminder.

But you may still say that the appeal of "be ye perfect" has no attraction for most of us. I disagree. Perhaps I can illustrate what I mean with the concluding lines of a short poem by Robert Frost. These lines, by the way, were the favorite of Dr. Tom Dooley, that wonderful American who, by his selfless medical services, won the hearts of the people of Laos and of so many others throughout the world.⁵

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*The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Is it not true that these lines, and the thought they enshrine, speak to your deepest nature and being? Read them again, slowly. What do they say? It's lovely here! It's good. We do, thank God, have some beautiful experiences that we'd like to linger over. How much good there is in any given moment! I'd like to stop, but I know I can't. There's a deepness in me that tells me I must go on. Yes, I do have promises to keep and miles to go before this journey is over.

Don't Frost's lines speak authentically to you?

And hear some other words: "The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings on it." * Savor these words quietly. "The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not [not to stop] to build your dwellings on it." There is to be movement, progress. We were not made to stand still. And we know it's so.

Where do these lines come from? The Bible? You won't find them there. A Scottish missionary found them in 1849. Going up the Ganges River, he stopped on his journey to visit the ruins of one of the largest mosques in the world, built by the fabled emperor Akbar. Within the massive gates, which stretch 120 feet, he came upon this complete sentence, carved in flowing Arabic: "Jesus, on whom be peace, has said, 'The world is merely a bridge: ye are to pass over it, and not to build your dwellings upon it.' "

A wondrous, mysterious thing. Could it possibly

have been that India heard His voice, too, as did the gospel writers who recorded, "Be ye perfect," "I am the way," "He that endureth shall be saved"? The idea is basically the same. Life is a process. We are to keep moving. We are to keep going. We are to seek perfection. Our feet may be in the dust and on the bridge of this world, but our longing and journeying is toward the better country, the mystic, shining land where there is no night and where our tears are wiped away.

The three statements of Jesus, and the thought that links them into a certain unity, are saying something significant to us about developing our spiritual reservoirs. The "perfection" is a spiritual matter. It is not a call to develop a perfect physique or such intellectual prowess that our minds are a combination of the Library of Congress and an electronic computer. The perfection we seek is that of God himself, a spirit, perfect in wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

The need for such questers in this modern world of ours is urgent. Our society is ailing with "the sickness of moral confusion, intellectual anarchy, and spiritual despair. The revolution of nihilism, born of this confusion and despair, is peculiar not alone to any one country or people but in varying degrees is taking place everywhere. With almost frantic zeal we search for the political or economic panacea that will save us and the world from disaster, not seeing, apparently, that the disaster is already upon us and that for the cure we must examine our own souls." 7

The unbroken pace of progress is necessary, both for society and the solitary man. The paths are long and deep and hard. They call for men who will endure.

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A whole library of books could be compiled that show man's ability and willingness to endure in his purposes. Here is just one example:

On Sept. 17, 1822, a Frenchman named Jean François Champollion entered the Royal Academy of Inscriptions in Paris. After a brief introduction from the lectern, he began to read these words, "This is the ninth year. The month is Xandikos, the fourth day. Under the majesty of Horus-Ra, the Pharaoh hath ascended upon the throne of his father, and the crown of Upper Egypt and the crown of Lower Egypt, mighty one of strength. . . ." ⁸

A riddle? Yes, it was a riddle that was finally solved. Champollion was reading the translation of the writings of the famous Rosetta Stone, which provided the key to Egypt's mysterious past. For fifteen centuries, the ancient hieroglyphics of Egypt had taunted linguists. But now the seal was broken and all could be read. It was a momentous discovery. Had Champollion stumbled on it by chance? Had he found the key in a moment's study or intuition? Far from it. It was the result of a lifetime's study and reflection by one of the most competent linguists of all time.

But even though the key was found in 1822, there are still, almost a hundred and fifty years later, acres of hieroglyphics to be transposed, to be deciphered, to be interpreted, to be put down in a useful form for future generations. For example, at the site of ancient Thebes an American team has been working for thirty years. Its work is built on the efforts of scholars, who, long before them, had worked at saving the writings of the Pharaohs from the walls around ancient Thebes. At the rate the

work is now going, it may take another hundred years to see this microscopic part of man's history accurately reproduced for the major libraries of the world. What patience! What persistence! What endurance!

But there are mysteries and enigmas wider and deeper and more important to man's development than deciphering the hieroglyphics of Egypt.

How can we live harmoniously in a world that is geographically a neighborhood? How can we cut out the roots of fear and aggression that make for war? How can the individual find for himself a meaningful existence—a life worth living? The answers to these questions will be found in the realm of the spirit.

And we are just standing on the threshold! The avenues to explore are endless. Experiments in living that cry out to be tried are legion.

What about extrasensory perception? Why is it that you and I have a quick affinity with one individual we meet, but with another there is a question mark, a fearfulness, an uncertainty, perhaps even an aversion? What do we know about "spiritual healing"? We know that a spirit of control and love can calm an angry spirit in another and assuage an aching heart. But how do you measure these influences? What instrument can register the vibrations of harmony or acrimony as a Geiger counter can tell of the presence of radioactive material? What makes a mob? How could the force of Hitlerism lead a culture, nurtured in Christian concepts for over a thousand years, down the horrible road to barbarism?

Are there more important questions? I know of none! And the way to the answer is our own personal vision of perfection. We do know that there are forces

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within and about us that can deepen our awareness of eternity and that have helped us get through life's storms. And isn't it true that our success in life's tough moments increases as our spiritual perception deepens? But one has to keep on the way.

Yes, we get a sense now and then of the power of the unseen spiritual world. I'm sure there is no one who has gone to church with regularity who could not speak of occasions when, in public worship or in private prayer, while pleading from the depths of mind and spirit, there came to him an unexpected strength, a quietude, a peace, a bit of light that wasn't there before.

Why do you go to church? What does it do for you? You may find it hard to put into words, but you may say, "It brings me a calmness, a comfort, a cleansing."

Is it all understood? Are all the hieroglyphics read? Have we achieved perfection? Is the total story here? Not at all! But you're a bit further, if you are trying, if you are staying on the way, if you are persevering.

At the turn of the century and perhaps up to and even following the First World War, the feeling was widespread that we were to get the answer to all mysteries through the physical sciences. Poverty was to be banished. We were to be led into an era of order and peace. But now we know that natural science is no idol at which to genuflect. Gone is the blatant cry, "Science is the only way!" The humble and honest scientist will say, "We have only a few grains of sand of what we believe to be truth. They have been picked up from the infinite shores of what is yet to be known. We have a long, long, long way to go!"

Sometimes I think it would be very healthy if both those in the scientific and in the spiritual realms were to admit that they are back at the stage where Champolion was before he had translated the Rosetta Stone. He did know something, for he had observed cartouches in the Egyptian hieroglyphics—that is, a series of hieroglyphics with a circle around them—and determined rightly that a cartouche represented the name of a royal person. Then he found, at the base of one obelisk, two cartouches which he could decipher. One was the name of Cleopatra and the other of Ptolemy. From careful analysis of these hieroglyphics, he got eleven symbols or letters.

It appears to me that in both the scientific and spiritual realms we're again at the first breakthrough. We have a few symbols on which to build, a few truths from which to work. And the thing needed above all else to keep us on the way is widespread and universal humility, not proud confidence. As there is an enduring perseverance, the mysterious in time becomes clearer, and, even as the falling drops will wear the stone, man can painstakingly reach the light of "be ye perfect."

If in our brief spark of life we stop at any one point, we miss much. Who would say, "I feel the same way, I react the same way, I think the same way, my sense of values are the same as when I was ten years old, or twenty, or thirty, or fifty, or sixty"? No one in his right mind would say that. We were meant for change and growth.

Youth is given its unique time of responsiveness to redemptive and new affections. Middle age has its time for questioning, building, and refinement of fact and

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truth. Then, as the sun begins to set over life's little day, the traveler can and should, if he has been enduring and on the way, begin to link himself, as he was not prepared to earlier, to what lies beyond the horizon. Not a face of fear but a smile looks with anticipation to the light of another morn on another shore. "He endureth." He uses all moments on this brief pilgrimage to grow spiritually. He will surely be saved.

True, a man needs help. We get lost, we become tired, we fail, we become depressed, we're ready to give up. The Christian has a comfort through Jesus of Nazareth who has said "I am the way." He has been over the long path. He has proved there is a capacity for perfectibility in man. And He beckons us on!

Don't we stop on this venture? Yes we do, occasionally. It is like the traveler stopping for the night to rest. But the journey knows no end, at least no end we can perceive, for far beyond our perception is, "Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect."

"But, O God," the traveler sometimes says, "how far, how far to this shining place? I'm so removed from it. I know I'm made for growth. I can see the point of one step a day. But I get so weary and the stretches of time seem so long."

It is at this point that the great words reassure us, "He that endureth shall be saved." All right, accept that. But you say, "I question the road. I, of myself, so often miss the path."

Here one can enter into one of the most comforting, the most "grace-giving" experiences of the mind and of the soul. It is that Jesus can and does come to our experience, like some emissary of the traveler who has been

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on ahead to explore the path and the way, and has arranged the lodging for the next night. He comes at this moment of uncertainty and He says, "Fear not. Follow me. Come. I am the way."

I say this is one of the most comforting, empowering, grace-giving experiences that the soul and mind of man can know. And you and I can know it right now.

No matter what our difficulties may be, or how uncertain we are at the moment, there is a calm confidence that is renewed as we remember we "have promises to keep." Fear vanishes. There is regeneration of strength that comes from the thought that there are miles to go before we sleep.

So we go on, not being perfect now but on the way, believing that far, far ahead is our destiny, enshrined in that ideal.

And we know we're headed in the right direction if we keep Him in sight who said, "I am the way."

*" . . . the lord . . . was moved with compassion,
and . . . forgave him. . . ."* MATTHEW 18:27

*"He who forgiveth, and is reconciled unto his enemy,
shall receive his reward from God."*

THE KORAN

IX

MAN'S NEED FOR FORGIVENESS

One of the really deep needs in your life and mine, as in the life of everyone, is the need for forgiveness.

We are all fallible. We fail to understand each other and we hurt each other. But if, in our sins and mistakes, we don't experience that healing element which is known as forgiveness, then bitterness tears apart the delicate webs of human relationships. An individual in that situation, who experiences only bitterness and never forgiveness, doesn't have to speculate on the geography of hell. He knows all about it; he's living there.

As I write this, I assure you I can back up these statements with tales of sharply painful experiences in the lives of people I have known. Years ago, I knew a man who could sit as a model for the cartoonist who draws the henpecked husband. When he had been twenty years younger, he had done something for which

he was genuinely ashamed. Telling his wife about it one day, he asked her forgiveness. But not only did she withhold it, she constantly reminded him of his long-past misdemeanor. And the wound that should have been healed by forgiveness so long ago was still raw when he told me the story. He could have been the unknown author of the statement, "A woman may consent to forget and forgive, but she never will drop the habit of referring to the matter now and then." There is some truth to the statement, as there would be if it said "man" instead of "woman." So, let me say to you, dear lady reader, if you would like to change the gender to masculine, do so, and put a copy of it in your husband's dressing-room mirror.

I wish this business of forgiveness were just a humorous item and could be treated in a light vein. But it isn't, and it can't.

When one sees and knows, as we all do, lives that are twisted and bent by grudges held since childhood, or when one thinks of all the healthy energies that have been thwarted and of all the once-sturdy emotional relationships that became gnarled and deformed, then this matter of forgiveness assumes a serious and sober importance.

What does Jesus say about forgiveness? Three things we all know, and which we need to be reminded of time and again.

One, our gaining the blessings of forgiveness is dependent on our forgiving other people.

Each Sunday in the church where you worship, you repeat the Lord's Prayer. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." ("Debts," "sins," "trespasses"—

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make it whatever word you want to use.) ¹ Jesus elaborates on this truth in several different ways. He does it in the sixth chapter of Matthew where He says, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." ²

This lesson is very aptly demonstrated in the parable of the king and his servants.³ The king was a man of obvious distinction. His servants were of high rank, for one of them owed him ten thousand talents. If we realize that the Hebrew talent in gold was equivalent to approximately \$32,000, and in silver equivalent to about \$2,100, the ten thousand talents were equal, even in silver, to \$21,000,000, a fabulous sum.⁴

When the king wanted the debt repaid, he called for an accounting. Because the noble servant could not pay up, the king had every right, according to the law of the times, to confiscate his servant's property and sell him and his family into slavery.⁵ The man said, in effect, "My lord, I do owe you this. You have every right to collect it. But I don't have it just now." He did not ask to be forgiven the debt. But he must have conveyed deep sincerity as he requested, "Give me a chance and I will pay back every penny I owe you." ⁶

The king was touched. Who would not be influenced by a genuine appeal, a sincere confession? The king was so moved with compassion that he *forgave* the debt.⁷

Yet that same debtor, having been saved by his lord's mercy, in the next incident fails to give a second chance to a minor servant who owed him a hundred pence, ten dollars.

Now the question involved here is this: Why is

God's forgiveness of us dependent on our forgiveness of other people?

While I pondered this question, I came across this statement by the seventeenth-century Frenchman La Rochefoucauld: "We forgive so long as we love."

François de La Rochefoucauld was a brilliant and sophisticated man, the member of a noble family whose forebears had fought on the Protestant side in the wars of religion. He was a soldier and scholar. In 1665, after years of writing and rewriting, he published his *Maxims*, which one of his biographers heralded in these words: "In uniting the four qualities of brevity, clearness, fullness of meaning and point, La Rochefoucauld has no rival."

These are wonderful criteria for any form of expression—brevity, clearness, fullness of meaning and point—and La Rochefoucauld's mastery on these scores is illustrated in this one statement: "We forgive so long as we love."

Do you love, in the deep sense of the New Testament? Do you have a merciful kind of tolerance toward everyone? Have you grown in the capacity to understand that those awful timbers you decry in other people probably appear so large because they typify your own faults and defects? Have you learned to see and accept your own foibles and, hence, smile at other men's foibles? Have you cultivated a genuine feeling of charitable good will? We forgive to the degree that we possess this kind of love.

Do we have it? Have you developed it toward your employer, who has the irritating habit of always picking on something you do wrong without ever complimenting

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you on what you do right? As an employer, do you blow your top at the inept work or the uncooperative spirit of your employee?

Such countless irritations and tensions can be resolved into a constructive pattern only through the spirit of charity, the capacity, if need be, to forgive. You can't forgive without sympathy, love, and mercy, without an affectionate concern that heals with its grace both the tiniest irritations and the blackest sins. Freedom from fret comes as we forgive. Yes, forgiveness comes to those who learn to love. As we learn to love, we light the tinder for the purifying fire of God's forgiveness. This is the flame to burn off the dross in us.

This is what Jesus is saying. He puts no limitations on the spirit of forgiveness. In words for our day, Peter said, "Lord, if I forgive some awful fellow seven times, that's surely enough, isn't it?"⁸ Jesus smiled and said, "Peter, keep at it. Not just seven times—seventy times seven."

The second thing that Jesus teaches about forgiveness is that it is dependent on sincere and honest confession.⁹ The servant who obtained release from his debt and assurance of a second chance must have made a clean breast of things. There had to be a compelling sincerity and honesty about that man that made the king do what he did.

Jesus speaks specifically on this to His disciples. He says that if someone does you an injury go to that man alone. Try to get it straightened out by open confession to him. Don't hold back. Put the whole thing out on the table between you. If you don't make any progress, then

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call in two or three witnesses. If this does not work, take the matter and present it before the church.¹⁰

Some of my readers may belong to denominations where this technique is being practiced, perhaps at the midweek prayer meeting where an individual may publicly confess and acknowledge his faults, his error, his sin. I can remember, as a young lad, sitting in such a meeting in a Methodist church and being amazed at three adults openly telling of their weaknesses. I was astounded that adults had such faults and that they were willing to tell about them. Only many years later did I realize that this practice was founded on the suggestion of Jesus.

To recite a group prayer of confession has been a long and worthy custom in the Reformed Presbyterian tradition which I serve.¹¹ But in the present parish where I now minister, the prevailing opinion of responsible leaders favors another practice: rather than the formal prayer of confession in the service, we join in a regular prayer of thanksgiving.

But I hope I show more than an insistent spirit, when, from time to time, in the pastoral prayer, which is a "priestly prayer" for all people, I include a prayer of confession. I cannot be honest and responsible in lifting the needs of a congregation before Almighty God, without being aware of our sinfulness and our need to confess. I must pray the prayer of confession, if for no one else, then for myself. It must be prayed as a reminder of our faults and a reminder too that, like a boil that needs the surgeon's scalpel, we can't have the healing of forgiveness without the knifelike cut of confession. What

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balm there is in the old words that follow the surgery: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ¹²

This is a necessary and helpful experience for every man. You and I may bridle at the words of some of those old prayers of confession, where, for example, we acknowledge that we are "miserable offenders" and "there is no health in us." But aren't we all offenders? And doesn't the knowledge of it make us miserable? And if we don't confess, we miss the cleansing that makes for spiritual and mental health.

The formal practice of the confessional has been praised, and rightly so, for it provides means for an individual to confess his errors to an unknown authority. For the Catholic devotee who can accept the authority of the priest, there can be a direct absolution.

But the Protestant position also affirms that you and I, as souls, must engage in the discipline of confession. The clergyman is available as spiritual counselor and advisor. The Protestant position is different in that it holds that we stand, in the final and naked aloneness, before God himself, without a priest as a necessary intermediary. Only God is the judge. He alone can forgive. We must cultivate regularly, and in privacy, the experience that ends with the purging knowledge, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive."

This emphasizes the third great thing that Jesus teaches. It is that God's forgiveness is boundless and without restriction.

In the Gospel of Matthew are these flintlike words: "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto

men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." ¹³ That unforgivable sin is spiritual callousness—a stubbornness and impenitence, a failure to acknowledge the spirit's work, or ascribing its power to Satan. This shuts the soul off from the channel of forgiveness. But the moving affirmation is that "all manner" of sin and blasphemy, God, in His infinite mercy and breadth, will forgive.

Something of that understanding is dramatized in the last scene of the third act of Shakespeare's *King Henry VI*. Cardinal Beaufort lies dying in his bedchamber. Sunk in despair, obdurate because of his sins, incapable of raising his spirit and mind to any hope of heaven, the hardened and traitorous man breathes his last.

Warwick, standing at the bedside exclaims, "So bad a death argues a monstrous life."

But the king, who earlier in the play expressed his conviction that judgment belonged only to God, now comes close to Warwick and says, "Forbear to judge, for we are sinners all." ¹⁴

How majestic is God! How profound His wisdom! His tender mercy knows no barrier before any penitent heart! When God's mercy is so inclusive, so deep, so great, it makes you feel wizened and small when you hold back any show of forgiveness toward a fellow human whose faults so often are tiny things. How we fetter our lives in not forgiving trivial offenses, when God has so unstintingly forgiven our vast sins!

The way out for us, as for Jesus and the greathearted king of whom He told, and the monarch in Shakespeare's play, is through that forgiveness that expresses itself not just seven times, but seventy times seven. The steps are

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clear—forgiveness toward others and honest confession on one's own part before God. Then the gates to the final mercy are opened. One of our deepest needs is met, and we can have the blessed experience: "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." ¹⁵

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

MATTHEW 22:21

"Every human being has a work to carry on within, duties to perform abroad, influences to exert, which are peculiarly his, and which no conscience but his own can teach."

WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

X

MAN'S NEED FOR BALANCED RESPONSIBILITIES

Jesus plainly taught that our first responsibility is to God. If we fulfill that obligation, the rest of life's duties and demands are met with competence. We are saved from confusion and failure. Let's consider the balance that can be ours as we live by His dictum.

A number of years ago a funeral director in New York City asked me to conduct the last services for a man who had just died. The man had lived alone at a most respectable address. There were no family members, except for one sister. She lived in a distant part of the country and was then on her way to New York.

I learned from her that the deceased had never married. Did he belong to a church? He had gone as a boy,

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she replied, but had never joined. As far as she knew, and her contacts with him had been increasingly rare as the years went by, he may have attended church sporadically.

What were his interests? He had none, she said. All he did was work. For over forty years her brother had gone to his place of business at 6 A.M. and had never left until after 7 P.M., six days a week, year in and year out.

Some of his business associates attended the funeral service. They gave me the odd feeling that they had come not to pay respect to a friend or associate but to see the last of a human machine whose usefulness had come to an end.

The man in the casket had been far from being bad, I felt. He must have had good intentions and the will to do what was right. As a youth he had set out to do his share of the world's work. He had done it, and much more. His life had become lopsided. He fell into the same imbalance as the man whose epitaph reads:

*Making money for my wife
Left me little time for life.
Other men their days divide
I made money, then I died.¹*

In the Book of Proverbs are these words, "A false balance is abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is his delight."² This statement refers, of course, to a time in history where justice demanded the introduction of accurate physical weights and measures. But the truth these words suggests extends into the social, intellectual, and emotional life of man. Keeping the scales balanced between our various duties makes for peace and order.

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Trouble always comes when the scales are not balanced.

Jesus was an advocate of this wisdom. What a harmony in His life between humanness and divinity, thought and action, laughter and seriousness, tenderness and firmness! He lived that doctrine of balance in word and deed.

To be a good steward, to save one's resources, to guard them well—this is a responsibility all of us must assume. But to hoard what one has, whether it be one's material resources or one's emotional, intellectual, and spiritual energies is to shut out life and to create something unnatural and monstrous. To hold back your warm responsiveness until your heart is calloused against human needs is an abomination to both man and God!

The balance in each man's life requires recreation—a time to play, a time to re-create the body, the mind, the spirit. This, too, is a responsibility all of us must assume. For each of man's various responsibilities, handled according to its proper significance, brings more harmony and usefulness to life; but kept out of balance, there can be desolation.

It may often be difficult to keep our several responsibilities in balance. But this does not deny that it is always important to aim for it. Few will argue with Leland Hinsie, M.D., who, in his evaluation of the psychosomatic relationships, contends that deep within every man is a longing to live in balance with himself and with others.³ Difficult as it may be to achieve that aim, the need to make headway toward it is always present. And of this, Jesus was speaking.

Take the instance of the Pharisees and representatives of the Herodians confronting Him with the ticklish

question of giving tribute money to the Roman overlords.⁴

Let's try to see this situation more fully than the bare record indicates. Who were the Pharisees? They were members of a Jewish party within the Hebraic tradition that kept alive what was called "oral tradition." There was the written work, given of God in the Pentateuch—in Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. But, according to tradition, there were other oral words received by Moses, passed on to Joshua, to the prophets, and down through the present Pharisaic party. These were interpretations of the written word. In addition to being the conservators of this oral tradition, they also came to be the guardians and interpreters of additional laws and rules accumulated through the centuries. The Pharisees become ultra-orthodox, subjecting themselves (and trying to make others conform), to the precise legalities outlined in the written and oral words.

The Herodians were partisans favoring the dynasty of the Herods. Caesar had appointed a Herod as tetrarch over Galilee. He was, as in a monarchy, followed by other Herods as overseers. The Herodian family was Idumaeen rather than Hebrew although it was Jewish in religion. In the boiling political and economic pot, there were a number of Jews called Herodians. They supported the dynasty of Herod Antipas and pinned their hope on the possibility that through the Herods the Roman yoke might be thrown off and the glorious days of the independent kingdom of David be restored.

You can easily sense from this brief sketch that, when the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Jesus, there were overtones and undertones indicating the pres-

ence of both political and religious dynamite.⁵ The question about tribute money most likely involved a lot more than, Shall one pay one's tax? In fact, the implications pointed toward the political and military overthrow of Rome.

So the question had many peripheral questions: "Shall we revolt? Shall we engage in passive resistance? Shall we hold back the tax as one way of showing our rebellion? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar or not?"

The answer Jesus gave is one not only to be carved on the marble façade of public buildings. It is an answer worthy of reflection as we face the practical question of how to keep in balanced order our several responsibilities. "Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

There is, in Jesus' response, complete indifference to the innuendoes, the shadings of meaning, that might be made much of by the narrow zealot, the political crackpot, the individual filled with self-interest. And there is a crispness in His response to the questioners. I wish we could have seen His face, heard the inflection of His words, as He answered. I'm sure there must have been impatience registered in flashing eyes and a tightening of the jaw muscles as came these clipped words: "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?"

Why did He speak that way? Because He would not permit Himself to get embroiled in a local controversy. His mind and spirit, for years, had been seeking to get some spiritual perspective, some basic answers to the enigmas of creation and living. He had learned to center His emotional and psychic energy on primary things and would not lower Himself to the level of partisan poli-

tics. He had thought too long, prayed too much, sought too far and wide, and gained too much perspective for that.⁶

Out of His perspective, long worked at in "the silent years," came the wisdom that, no matter how tense and complicated an immediate situation might be, any secular problem would work itself out. The likely way to solution, Jesus knew, was through the light of principle, rather than the heat of argument. Here, as in many another instance, Jesus avoids fanaticism in any form. He has nothing to do with a dogmatism that wildly waves its banners for one point of view. Were He asked today, "Shouldn't we go to war against Russia?" or, "Is it morally right to pay taxes to a government that's foolishly spending money on foreign aid?" or, "Can a Christian engage in military service?" I'm confident He would have looked and responded as He did—"Why tempt ye me?" How we need to learn from Him here!

The only way we really begin to handle our responses to these and all other questions of secular importance is to grow in the wisdom of Jesus. In His perspective is understanding that empires rise and fall but that life continues. His wisdom knows that, though there are knotty problems for man in Cuba or the Congo or Laos, human nature, with all its bungling, will in time resolve its dilemmas, but that the resolutions will depend on patience and wisdom, and justice and mercy.

Feel, through the long sweep of history, the sorrows of all mankind. Consider the pathos and the nobility of countless generations praying, seeking comfort and peace—desiring a harmonious life, but failing so often. See the panorama, on a canvas greater than any artist has

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claimed, of the peoples of all ages and places, laughing and crying, hoping and trying and falling, bruised and bloodstained, but rising time and again with a dogged will, if not always a radiant faith, and still plodding on! And discern that majestic, but hidden purpose of a spirit working for righteousness, the creative spirit in the shadows, keeping watch over His own.

Have something like this in your perception and you'll grow in the competence which Jesus had, the competence of decisively discussing that which is irritating and petty. Yes, the capacity to separate more surely what is spurious from what is sterling and to push the nonessentials aside—this is the spirit that seeks communication to us in the man who said, "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's."

But let us seek further guidance from these words. I find them saying plainly: Do that which in the course of life is yours to do.

Some commentators spend much time wondering about the question, Is Jesus here compartmentalizing life—to Caesar what is Caesar's, to God what is God's?⁷ I don't think so. I am sure He is seeking to tell us that we won't manage the temporal side of life adequately until we get an orientation from God's eternal truth.

There is no sentimentality in the dictum of Jesus, no elaborate explanation, no overplaying or underplaying the matter. In effect, the conversation was simply:

"What is this?"

"A tax is due to Caesar."

"Well, render to Caesar what Caesar requires!"

And He says the same in regard to your personal affairs. You say, "I'm a wife, but I'm also a mother and a

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manager of a household, a cook, a seamstress, a chauffeur, a hostess, and many other things that sometimes just tear me apart. I get awfully tense and tired by it all."

Jesus is saying that He understands, but see what is undeniably yours to do, and do it. Put what's first, first. Do that and then the next.

You say, "I'm a man. I have my vocation, but I'm also a husband, a father, a citizen, and there are a dozen other claims upon me."

Jesus says to forget the peripheral things. Disregard the inane, the petty, the picayune. Do, in order, what is yours to do!

Jesus had a more opulent wisdom than Confucius. Jesus crystallized the wisdom of the centuries on the totality of life and all its emanations and added His uniquely creative insights. Whereas Confucius, who might be called a specialized, practical philosopher, concentrated much of his counsel on the very matters we're discussing now—that of handling with propriety our several responsibilities. Among the crystallizations of his wisdom are these words about four basic areas:

*Between father and son there should be family affection;
Between the ruler and the ruled, righteousness;
Between husband and wife, division of labor, each doing
his part;
Between friends, fidelity.*⁸

His terseness is similar to that of Jesus.

A person says, "I'm troubled about the complexities of life, the many demands upon me!"

I think Jesus and Confucius would give mutual consent to the response, "Render to Caesar what is Caesar's:

in the parent-child relationship, affection; in the ruler-ruled, righteousness; in the family, a division of responsibility; between friends, fidelity!"

As I understand the words of Jesus, He was not only saying, "Do what is yours to do without equivocation or question." He was also saying, "Do it promptly, do it fully, and do it gladly." 9 "Render"—*not* tomorrow, but now, with no questioning, no quibbling, no delay!

Yes, do it fully. No holding back, no half-hearted, half-baked response. Your responsibility is a part of the structure of life. Enter into it. Make your part of the framework solid—a worthy addition.

But then too, do it gladly. Get rid of complaint and grudge and resentment. Eliminate these stagnating forces. Try to do your task enthusiastically.

Take, for example, the matter of citizenship. We're all citizens. Each is a part of the corporate body of this nation. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's," Jesus says. Fulfill the role of citizenship at every point where there is demand or opportunity. But do it promptly and do it wholeheartedly, fully, amiably! On the efforts and attitudes of such citizens the nation stands. I once read about Alfred the Great. A powerful ruler in the ninth century, he left an indelible imprint on the formation of England and English culture. Read the bare record through: He fought the Danes, who were sweeping over the little island of England and threatened to overwhelm the scattered people living there.

Alfred unified his people and conquered the invaders. But then, with amazing wisdom, he saw to it that Guthrum, the captured Danish king, was baptized as a Christian. And later, with wholehearted generosity, Alfred put limitations on his own power. Any decrees of his had to

have the approval of the people before they were put into effect. Some of the finest elements in the English-speaking civilization begin with the attitude and character of Alfred, truly "The Great."

Do you know that the basic meaning of the word "civilization" is simply "to be civil to each other"? This implies solving our problems by persuasion rather than coercion. It was through Alfred's full-orbed devotion in fulfilling his role, in balancing his responsibilities that there came into being much of what is now valued in English culture. Promptly? Yes! With unstinting attention to the task? Yes! In a strong, gladsome spirit? Yes!

The injunction "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's" is also saying, "Do first things first."¹⁰ This isn't difficult in some areas. If the baby is screaming and, at the same time, there is an unanswered letter on your desk, no question arises as to which responsibility should get first attention. But the decision becomes more difficult when we deal with less clamorous and clear-cut demands. Still, we probably make many of our so-called problems more complicated than we need to. "Shall I use this evening—the one evening that looks free—to catch up with my professional reading so as to retain my competence, or shall I attend the meeting that's called to aid a project for handicapped children?"

If you asked that question of Jesus, I think He would reflect the impatience He showed to the Herodians and the Pharisees. He might say, "I know the enigmas are legion. The choices you must make will never end. There will always be tension between personal and social responsibility. You are to use your mind as you ask, 'At this time and in these circumstances, what gets priority?'"

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Jesus says that you're not left on tenterhooks. There's no reason to vacillate too long if you take into account the pivotal significance of "the things that are God's." It is through this vertical sense of God that the horizontal relationships will be met with competence, one by one. Render unto God what is due Him. But what is due Him, and how it must be rendered, is up to you to determine, and once it has been determined, each responsibility will be seen in its right perspective, each in its due season. Render unto God what is due Him first, and all the other pieces of the jigsaw puzzle will fall into their proper place.

What is due God? Your attention. I often think, as I see how a week goes by, how time is frittered and wasted, and energies spread as from a shotgun, that coming into church on Sunday morning is the most important thing any of us can do to get help in organizing our time. Give, in that experience, your attention to God! Grant to Him your honor! Your obedience! Your faith! ¹¹ Yes, and your allegiance, too, as a subject, who doesn't have all the wisdom and who bows in homage before one who does. Give your dedication as one who often fails in the life of love would kneel before one whose love never fails. Give your hopeful service, as one who wants more understanding, salutes the throne where perfect calm and wisdom abide. You can't seek this relationship without gaining a greater competence to see what your duty is, and to do it, and do it well. You'll be able to do it with a gladness that wasn't there before.

Try it. It works. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but, first of all, render to God the things that are God's.

" . . . when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them. . . ." MATTHEW 9:36

"We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by traveling a sequestered byway, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens." JANE ADDAMS

XI

MAN'S NEED FOR COMPASSION

Some years back James Gordon Gilkey, Sr., minister of the South Congregational Church in Springfield, Massachusetts, shared with his congregation a letter, written by a clergyman named John Todd to his aunt. In 1806 when John Todd was a boy of six, both of his parents died and he was sent to his aunt. He lived with her until he went to Yale. After finishing college, he engaged in further studies leading him into the Christian ministry.

In his early forties, he is sitting in his study in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The beloved aunt, far advanced in years and now seriously ill, has written her nephew about death. She's afraid. "Will it be an agonizing and terrifying thing?" she asks. "Will it be just a blank nothing?"

Her nephew puts his pen to the paper before him and writes these lines:

It is now nearly thirty-five years since I, a little boy of six, was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word you would give me a home, be a kind of mother to me.

I have never forgotten the day when I made the long journey of ten miles to your home in North Killingworth. I can still recall my disappointment when, instead of coming for me yourself, you sent your colored man, Caesar, to fetch me. I can still remember my tears and my anxiety as, perched on your horse and clinging tight to Caesar, I started for my new home. Night fell before we finished our journey, and as the darkness deepened I became more and more afraid. Finally I said anxiously to Caesar, "Do you think she'll go to bed before we get there?"

"Oh no!" he answered reassuringly, "She'll sho' stay up fo' you. When we gets out of these here woods you'll see her candle, shinin' in her window."

Presently we did ride out into a clearing, and there—sure enough—was your candle.

I remember you were waiting at the door of your house, that you put your arms around me, that you lifted me—a tired and frightened little boy—down from the horse. There was a fire on your hearth, a warm supper on your stove. Then after supper you took me up to my room, heard me say my prayers, and then sat beside me till I dropped to sleep.

You undoubtedly realize why I am recalling all these things to your mind. Some day soon God may send for you, to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons, the strange journey. At the end of the road you will find love and a welcome, you will be safe—there as here—in God's love and care.

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Surely He can be trusted to be as kind to you as you were to me years ago.¹

When I first read those lines, a lump came in my throat. I read them again and tears were in my eyes. I read them once more, asking why this was so. I said to myself, there are three reasons. This letter, first, reveals a deep pathos in man at being lost and alone; second, it shows the truth that infinite pathos is met in compassion; and third, it describes an experience known to us humans at every stage of life. It tells of a spring where man, from birth to death, needs to drink.

The apprehensions of life are about us at every period. Children and young people, keenly aware of their own fears, may find it difficult to believe that strong terrors plague their parents and grandparents. But we who are older know that the menace of isolation, of failure, of cruelty, of alienation, is never dissolved. Always there is some dark and ominous opponent, whose sinister figure blocks the road we want life to follow.

We can understand the terror of the child riding in the alien woods. But can we say the fear is less for the old aunt facing life's end? At each stage of experience, isn't our need much the same—the need for someone's tender hand of mercy reaching out to us at the portentous times of alarm? The grave hour is at hand—the alien woods—the journey toward the unknown.

What do you need? Isn't it compassion?

Someone who considers himself extremely realistic may say, "This is going off on some sentimental tangent. I'm not sure I agree at all."

George Bernard Shaw contended that "Compassion

is the fellow-feeling of the unsound.”² Others holding a similar concept may say: “What man really needs at life’s fearsome times is courage and wisdom, truth and clear direction. These are the means through which man overcomes the menace of the unknown. Only with such qualities can he stop his tears and end his longing for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still.”

I don’t deny that. It is true. We’re helped greatly by wisdom and courage and direction. But aren’t these qualities given through someone’s compassion—through his supporting arms, his kind words, his encouraging smile? Isn’t truth and courage conveyed most surely in the vessel of someone’s concern or devotion toward you?

I can read a book on health. The rules for sleep, exercise, proper nourishment are noted. I mark that overwork can damage the nervous system and cause permanent injury. But these counsels are nothing compared to the act of a physician friend when he put his arm around my shoulder and said, “You’re trying to do too much and putting too much into it all. Just remember, you’re doing no one a favor by running into a breakdown. Come to my office tomorrow for a thorough examination.”

His spirit of personal warm concern has helped me more than his eventual prescription. His compassion was a more healing potion than the tonic he recommended.

Does Jesus speak to this cardinal need? I wonder if at times He’s talking about anything else. Does He reveal a God who cares for you and me? The answer is, Yes, He does.³

True, there are harsh, derogatory, even malignant

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words attributed to Him in the New Testament. Some of them, I believe, may be spurious. Certainly the harshest are at variance, and inconsistent, too, with the repeated vignettes that portray Him as the world's most compassionate man.

Children had a much less conspicuous role in His day than in ours. But those who knew Jesus never again ignored or cuffed them, as though they were some barnyard animal, after He caressed them and said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." ⁴

Jesus was never namby-pamby. Never once did He condone ethical weakness or moral degradation. His heart was divinely tender, but there was no weak lassitude there—no sentimental gush that put a rosy-hued cloak over meanness or cruelty. Never was He casual or indifferent to man's sins.

The anonymous eighteenth-century writer Junius, whose pen was often dipped in bile when he wrote against the political injustices and follies of his day, said, "Compassion to an offender who has grossly violated the laws is . . . a cruelty to the peaceable subject who has observed them." ⁵ But he couldn't have written that about Jesus, for never did He condone man's folly.

But it is true that with His inexhaustible mercy He went on loving the best in men even when they appeared at their worst. There was in Him a boundless compassion which could bear the pain of man's ignorance and degradation, and still whisper at the Cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." ⁶ He was moved with compassion.

He saw the multitudes. What did He do? Did He

say, "The dunderheads! To hell with the people! This is the fodder I'll use to feed my ego"? Was He moved by some castigating spirit that sent them home like whipped dogs to their smelly kennels? No! He was moved with compassion. "I came not to condemn—not to destroy. I came to save." ⁷

A woman of questionable character came into the room where He was dining. Jesus must have noticed how some of the guests averted their heads in embarrassment that they might avoid being recognized by the lady. As she anointed His feet with ointment, His tears must have fallen with hers. His voice was gentle with God's eternities as He stopped the hissing complaints of His disciples with the words, "Don't trouble this woman—she has trouble enough. Bless her. She is doing a beautiful thing." ⁸

Moved with compassion!

That's how they described His response to Jerusalem when, before the Palm Sunday journey, he looked over the city and said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." ⁹

That's how they described His response to the blind, lost in endless darkness, but hoping in Him for light and so pathetically petitioning Him for mercy. He was moved with compassion. ¹⁰

That's how they remembered His reaction to that appealing young man who couldn't pay the price of discipleship and who walked sorrowfully away. ¹¹ He was moved with compassion.

That's how He tried to teach us what the heart of

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God was like, in the parable of the Good Samaritan. That unpopular man from Samaria on the way to Jericho did not pass on the other side, but was moved with compassion to help the beaten and bleeding victim by the roadside.¹²

That's how He tried to describe the infinite compassion of God as He told the parable of the Prodigal Son. The young man has wasted his substance, but now he is coming home.¹³ As he rises over the brow of the hill, look at him, way down the road—he's a foolish, a pathetic, a shabby and shamefaced figure. He walks slowly, for it's a rueful, remorseful homecoming.

But while he's still a long way off, his father sees him. His father, in spite of the son's bedraggled appearance, recognizes him. The father sees him through the eyes of compassion. Those eyes of the soul enable him to feel the same remorse and regret that are revealed in those uncertain steps and in the downcast face of his repentant son. And what does Jesus say about the father? He uses the words His biographers use, time and time and time again, about Him, "The father was moved with compassion—and he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him and said, 'My son was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.' "

That's how God cares for you and for me.

As we stand at the darkest of all portals, He says to you in words that come from the most compassionate man that ever lived, "Don't be afraid. Let not your heart be troubled. I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." ¹⁴

You and I may let compassion at times run a bit dry in our hearts—but God never, never, never will.

It hardly needs emphasis that Christ calls on us to emulate this quality of compassion. There can be an endless chain of compassionate support flowing from His life through you and me. If we will pass it on to others, something of the kingdom of God will be realized.

Thomas Kelly must have been close to the root of this spirit when he found the wonder of developing "the internal prayer of carrying."¹⁵ It is, he explains, as though you and another shared a common life and love. You support others by your "carrying" as you are supported by them.

"Carrying," in the sense used here, is a cultivated attention and concern for someone else. You do not pass by on the other side of the road. You try to stand in that other person's shoes. As you develop this (with the barber who cuts your hair, toward the frightened refugee, or the President of your country), a spirit of compassion buds and flowers.

And behold, as your spirit becomes a blessing to others, it is you who are blessed most of all. A quietude, a dimension of fineness and nobility comes into your life. You begin to have the joy and the strength known only to the people of compassion. One of your deepest needs is met—you know you are a son of God.

The poet put it well:

*Come into the circle of love and justice,
Come into the brotherhood of pity,
Of holiness and health!
Come and ye shall know peace and joy,
Let what ye desire of the universe penetrate you,
Let loving-kindness and mercy pass through you,*

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And truth be the law of your mouth.

*For so ye are channels of the divine sea. . . .*¹⁸

It may not be a high festival in the church year, but is it not fitting for every spiritual seeker, who gets this teaching from Jesus, to exclaim at any time, "Hosanna! Blessed is He who has brought us these good tidings of compassion!"

" . . . this do in remembrance of me." LUKE 22:19

"It would be more honourable to our distinguished ancestors to praise them in words less, but in deeds to imitate them more."
HORACE MANN

XII

MAN'S NEED TO RECALL NOBLE EXPERIENCES

In the year 1945, some poor peasants in upper Egypt were exploring the arid cliffs that rise up from the Nile to form the Sahara Desert. They stumbled across a cave in which they found several sealed earthenware jars. Opening them, they discovered thirteen leather-bound papyrus volumes, which were from a Coptic library, that had been here hidden and beautifully preserved by the dry climate of Egypt for some sixteen centuries.

Other famed scrolls were brought to light from the region of ancient Palestine above the Dead Sea, and the Egyptian find took a secondary place in the popular press. But it was heralded throughout the academic world by students of the Bible and other ancient writings and materials. One reason for their intense interest lay in the fact that, among the forty-nine different works that were

included in the thirteen ancient volumes, there was a little book called *The Gospel According to Thomas*.

Initial study of this particular manuscript seems to indicate that it is founded on one of the earliest primitive manuscripts that tell of the life of Jesus. It probably was a Greek manuscript, dating from about A.D. 140. If this date is close to being correct, we have here one of the earliest complete documents recording the sayings of our Lord. But it is still more fascinating that *The Gospel According to Thomas* contains sayings attributed to Jesus that never have been seen before. They're found in no other sources, not in the New Testament or any other ancient materials.

Among such completely new sayings is this: "Jesus said, 'The Kingdom of the Father is like a woman who was carrying a jar full of meal. While she was walking on a distant road, the handle of the jar broke. The meal streamed out behind her on the road. She did not know it. She had noticed no accident. After she came into her house, she put the jar down and found that it was empty.' " ¹

The translators of this particular version of "Thomas" have put their reading in cryptic English. How good that is! For here is an analogy to a very real and general experience. It tells how you and I can lose what is precious in life. That which is fine and useful can dribble away till we have only emptiness. Life's strong memories, its best moments, its noblest experiences, which we've treasured from the past and which can give nurture for the future—those things that can truly bless and support us can be lost. If we are careless, if we fail to examine the jar from time to time, its good contents

can be dissipated, till at the end of life's little day we set it down, only to find it empty. There's nothing there.

This is not the time to discuss the validity of the telling story, which, if it did not come directly from Jesus, is certainly akin to the way He thought and the simple but eternal way He spoke. It is a lucid parable, which emphasizes what the New Testament portrays Jesus as doing—asking us to remember Him.

"This do," He said, "in remembrance of me,"² as He broke bread and shared the cup with His disciples just before His crucifixion. He must have foreseen the health that comes to His followers as, at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper today, they take of the bread and wine and, in that act, remember Him. This is one way to keep the vessel of life's noble experiences intact. In healthy introspection at such a hallowed time, we can examine the jar of our spiritual being. Is anything being lost? Is the handle broken?

Where the Jewish tradition has vitality among the Sons of Abraham, it is due to the fact that they remember, in song and ceremony, their heritage. As the followers of Jesus remember Him in the Lord's Supper, so for the Jew there is recollection of the Passover, when the Angel of Death, at the time of the desperate struggle for freedom between Moses and Pharaoh, passed over the homes of the Israelites. The remembrance of such auspicious moments, their crucial spiritual achievements in history, preserves the jar. It gives a dignity and a stability for each Hebrew today on his life pilgrimage.

Many people report that those who participate in the famed Passion play of Oberammergau seem to exhibit in themselves something of the true character of those

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whom they portray. Entering into the lives of significant men about the Christ, being a part of that epic drama of the passion, makes them more than actor. The portent and glory of the past is reincarnated in them.

In remembrance of life's noble moments, in feeling one's connection with a strong racial, national, and religious heritage, there is a cleansing and an uplifting power. Sociologists and historians tell us that the stability of the long cultures of China and India were maintained for centuries because there was a constant remembering of that which was noble and good in the past. In reliving the best of yesteryear, its power and wonder enter into those who do the remembering. The treasure of the jar remains intact.

It is interesting that when Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me," it was the Passover night.³ Jesus must have been thinking of the significance of the Passover in Jewish history at that hour. There must have been a receptiveness to things of meaning that made the request, "Do this in remembrance of me," stand out with particular vividness.

What are we to remember? What did Jesus want men to remember about Him that would help them in their daily lives?

First, we are to remember Jesus himself. He didn't ask us to remember first His teaching. "Remember *me*." It is the man in His fullness that we are to keep recollecting. But can we be more specific? Yes, I discern an effort on His part to make certain traits clear and appealing. Seeing them in Him enables us to add to the jar of spiritual nutriment we carry and depend on.

It's good to remember His wide tolerance. Think of

the fact that He knew Judas was a traitor. It was not an awareness that came on Maundy Thursday. Through the weeks and months together, Jesus knew his taints and weaknesses, and yet He tolerated Judas. This is an example of so many instances where we see His quiet restraint, His patient forbearance. Others might, in a violent, heated way, oppose evil. But rarely did Jesus so respond. Most to whom Jesus spoke hated the Samaritans. Yet Jesus made the Good Samaritan the hero of the immortal parable that comes down through the centuries.⁴

The woman taken in adultery was to be stoned by self-righteous judges. Jesus did not join the angry group. "Let him without sin cast the first stone." The accusers and would-be executioners, hearing that challenge, and taking advantage of His indifference as He wrote in the sand, crept silently away. When the incredulous woman, bowed and shaking, face hidden in her arms, finally raised her head and opened her eyes to see only Jesus standing by, she couldn't believe it. The evil-faced critics and condemners, whose stones she expected to feel crashing into her back, were gone. And the man who stood there, eyes filled with pity and strength, said, "Neither do I condemn thee. . . ." ⁵

There was a breadth about Him. He was not interested in just one type of person. He was interested in all—young and old; men and women; student and farmer; the rich and the poor; the wise and the foolish. How we can learn, as we learn from Him the lessons of toleration!

He kept Judas with Him to the end. He knew of His betrayal, and yet at the moment when Judas dipped his

hand in the dish and said, "Is it I?" Jesus didn't complain or condemn. He simply said, "Thou hast said." ⁶

It is good to remember that this was a man who had a wise, balanced tolerance, a man who must have achieved that tolerance through such concentration on the good that the evil was dissolved by the purer light of the highest rays He sought.

Again it is so good to say to ourselves, Remember His passion for perfection. No other teacher has ever commanded in the fashion as did Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect." ⁷ He strove for it. He was perfect, even as the Father in heaven is perfect.

We do not know the full record of His acts during the thirty so-called silent years of His life. I'm sure they were not years of indifference, of simply lying fallow. There is undoubted evidence that He was studying the Bible. His knowledge of the Old Testament was phenomenal and His capability to quote it with verbatim accuracy and aptness was unmatched. There seems to be evidence that He traveled, that He may have been in Persia studying with the wise men there. We know He was in Egypt for a time. ⁸ One brief picture from His childhood shows Him with senior scholars and wise men in Jerusalem, asking questions and speaking with such depth and maturity that His listeners were astonished at His understanding. ⁹

Here was a man who sought to live each moment with such grace, intelligence, and competence, that it had the hallmark of perfection. There was a holy fire burning in Him to forge and fashion each moment till it bore no flaws under the white light of God's perfection.

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If it is true that deep in our subconscious is the buried memory of the race's history, a sizeable portion of it will be of a negative and detrimental character. We are often enveloped by dark moods, and we have a potential cruelty that shows its evil face in our hard attitudes toward others. We cry, "The thing I should do, I don't." So it may be that the deep buried influences show themselves in the light of our daily living.

But with our conscious mind, we can select and center on the good, the noble. Exposure to saints and heroes, and participation in splendid national or racial memories are ways of educating the subconscious. We thereby generate a force for putting the excellent in a place of dominance and superiority. It is an influence that inches man forward on the road to "the best."

Remember that His life was committed to the way of helpfulness. A woman came to see me recently who spoke in broken English. She said her age was seventy-seven. Her heels were run down; her coat, of inexpensive cloth, was frayed and faded. Her face was deeply lined. But her eyes were bright and strong. She hoped that I might help her find someone who could replace her in a family of three adults which she served. Two of those in the household were invalided. The third was incapable of providing a living. The story she told was that years ago she had come to the home as a practical nurse when the mother was dying. The daughter was mentally disturbed and needed help, particularly after the mother's death, so she stayed on. Almost twenty years later, now at age seventy-seven, she said, "I can't carry on. I'm getting too weak to do all the work that's required." But her real concern was for the family.

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What were her wages? Well, the family had lost their resources and now lived on relief, so her salary was an occasional few dollars a week, a room, and her board.

Did she do the laundry? Yes. Was there anyone else to care for the invalided sister? No. But there was a tenderness in her eyes as she said, "After my husband died, years back, I think God must have sent me to help them. But I'm so tired now, and I can't go on."

Then she added, "I think the only purpose in life is to really try to be helpful to each other." I don't know of anyone who exemplified, with more patience and selflessness, one of the dominant traits of Jesus Christ—to be genuinely helpful to those in need.

Remember how He went about doing good, how He demonstrated a passion to help His fellow men.

Then remember His trust in God. He was human enough to cry from the pain of the Cross, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" ¹⁰ He was human enough to plead in Gethsemane, "Take away this cup from me." ¹¹ But that powerfully central trust in God's good will and purpose always came through, "not my will but thine be done." ¹²

If we want to put something deeply precious and central in the cruse that we carry on our shoulders through life, something that will always pay dividends, put in it what He had—a deep, deep trust that all things under God's care work together for good.

Remember, too, the glory of His sacrifice. The Cross might have been evaded. But it wasn't. ¹⁸ He might have avoided going to Jerusalem. But He didn't. He went. He might have side-stepped carrying the Cross, and bearing what theologians have seen as "the propitiation for man's

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sins." Remember the wonder of His willingness to sacrifice His life for us all.

Hold and treasure and add to the noble moments of life. Remember the heroes of your race and country, the heroes of your faith. Remember the best influences in your own life. Most worthy of all, remember Jesus. So keep the jar of your spiritual treasure from accident. Don't be like that pathetic woman who lost her meal. Guard your cruse of noble memories. It has good nourishment not only for the hunger of the moment, but also for the long journey that lies ahead.

"And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him."

MATTHEW 28:9

"All great natures delight in stability; all great men find eternity affirmed in the very promise of their faculties."

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

XIII

MAN'S NEED TO KNOW THE SPIRIT'S POWER

On that first Easter morning, as the sun broke over the Mount of Olives there was no doubt about it, Jesus of Nazareth was dead. That most compassionate man to walk this earth, who had hung on the Cross as only a spirit-filled Saviour could have hung, there was no question but that He was dead.

Pilate and Caiaphus and the Pharisees and the Sanhedrin—they all knew it. The Roman soldier who touched the tunic, balled in the corner of his pallet, which he had won at the foot of the Cross—he knew it. The mother, who held the limp body for a moment as it came down from the Cross, who caressed and hallowed it with her tears—she knew He was dead. The disciples

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who were headed toward their homes with heavy feet, and Joseph of Arimathaea, who had given his tomb that the body might have a burial—they all knew that He was dead.

If that light-filled story—the record of Jesus—had stopped at this point, there would be no church. There would be no New Testament. There would be no nineteen centuries of history that have some of their strongest and wisest forces from those who have followed Jesus. There would have been little influence from that man whom the ages honor as “the greatest that ever lived.” Remember this: the New Testament was written, and the church came into being, because of the happenings on that first Easter dawn.

Yes, everyone knew that Jesus was dead. What they did not know was the full power of His spirit. They had seen Him perform miracles of healing, and felt that in Him were forces they but dimly perceived. Of course their lives, changed by His radiant, redemptive power, were proof of the compelling force that was in Him. But they were to have yet further proof, further evidence of the spirit's power. And the proof was soon provided.¹

Two women came through the dew, at the hour of dawning, to the garden where He was buried. In unbelief, they saw His tomb was open. An angel of light was standing by the heavy sealing-stone, that now was rolled aside to reveal an empty sepulcher. They turned to run, with amazement and wonder, to tell the disciples. But as they were hurrying on the way, behold, they saw a figure in the garden who saluted them, “All hail.” The tone of the voice, the confident simplicity of the words, told them who it was.

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He was alive! His spirit would live forevermore!

That majestic soul, that supreme spirit was for eternity, and the proof of its power was there before them. His words were those of glad triumph. Now they knew that the spirit was strong—that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come could subdue it.² The proof was there—"All hail." And they fell at His feet and worshiped Him.

There is a powerful message that I hear not only at Easter but each day. It is a message that says there is an unconquerable power in the spirit, that transcendent part of man that thinks and aspires, that soars in freedom and hope above the catastrophes of the world. It affirms that you and I thwart our best selves; we are traitors to our God and to our history if we fail to recognize it, if we do not honor it!

The evidence of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection is irrelevant to the fact that Christ's spirit transcended death. Even those who view the Resurrection account as legend, see that the details were "inspired by an inward logical necessity which transformed the spiritual manifestation which illuminated and strengthened Peter, into the material manifestation described by the sources."³ There was, if no physical resurrection, a deeply moving subjective vision. Even the most skeptical critics agree there would have been no Christianity if confidence in the Resurrection had not been accepted and preached.⁴

What fascinates me is *the experience* of the living Christ that was present in the disciples following the death of Jesus. Argument as to whether it was a "physical" or "spiritual" body they "saw" is completely sec-

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ondary to their realization of the moving power of the spirit of Jesus. That was and is deathless. They had seen Him physically die on the Cross. But on Easter morning *they knew*, in a compelling vision and with potent realization, that the power of His character, the dynamic of His spirit, walked through and lived beyond the grave.

Let us detail some of the facets of the spirit's power. One facet of that spirit is selflessness. It is well illustrated in a true story from the First World War, told by Leslie Weatherhead.⁵

It concerns two men in the British army who had developed a deep friendship. They were like David and Jonathan. One of them had to go out into no-man's-land and his friend saw him hit by a bullet and fall. He cried to his commanding officer, "Sir, we've been so very close. Let me go out and bring him in."

The officer shouted, "I can't give permission. It's obvious your friend is mortally wounded. No man can live out there. I can't afford to lose you both."

But before he finished speaking, the man jumped over the top of the trench and, incredibly, got to his friend. Those watching saw him lift his buddy on his shoulders and then stagger, as he himself was hit. With superstrength he crawled back to the trench, his buddy on his back, where both fell in.

The officer and soldiers, who grouped about, quickly discovered that the one who had been rescued was dead, and that the brave rescuer was mortally wounded. The officer sadly and bitterly spoke out, "I told you! I told you it wasn't worth it! Your friend is dead, and here you are terribly wounded."

But the response came, "Sir, it was worth it."

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"How possibly could it have been worth it?"

The soldier looked at his officer with his dying eyes, and said, "It was worth it because when I got to him, he was alive. It was worth it because I heard him say, 'Jim, I knew you'd come.' "

Do you need proof of the power of the spirit, the spirit of sacrifice and selflessness? This incident will send a tingle in your spine, particularly if the quality it bespeaks should knock at what may be a fast-closed door, where you have locked a capacity for generous and selfless living. Such a spirit lives past death. It stands in condemnation of our selfishness, of our picayune and sometimes unworthy acts and thoughts and ways. It is proof of the spirit's power.

There's power, too, in forgiveness. That force of the spirit continuously seeks to break out of any death-clothes, to be resurrected and to shout, All hail!

"Forgive" is a word, that, issuing into light and fire of action, does not die.

There is the story of the twenty-six-year-old Korean boy, In Ho Oh, who was brutally killed by ten other boys on a West Philadelphia street in 1958.⁶ It is a story that needs repeating. The boy's parents in Pusan, Korea, devoted Christians, wrote back to America, "We are sad, not only because of the unsaved souls and the paralyzed human nature of the murderers. We thank God that He has given us a plan whereby our sorrow is being turned into Christian purpose. Our family has met together and decided to petition that the most generous treatment possible, within the laws of your government, be given the criminals." Then they sent \$500 (five times the average

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annual income of a Korean), adding, "Daring to hope that we can do something to minimize such juvenile criminal actions, which are to be found not only in your country, but in Korea, too."

The power of that spirit stirred thousands of Philadelphians, institutions, agencies, and the local government, to try to relieve interracial tensions and the problems of the juvenile teen-ager in our urban society. One pebble of Christian forgiveness and generosity creates ripples that move on, and on, and on.

There is power in those facets of the spirit—selflessness and forgiveness. There's power too in integrity, in loyalty. There's power in a passion for freedom, in sincere goodness.

Shakespeare, in his *Julius Caesar*, rightfully affirms:

*Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,
Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit.*⁷

You feel the power of the spirit in the best of the history of our nation. You feel it in the Polish cardinal Wyszynski, saying in our own time to the Communist overlord, "A political system can build streets and factories, but it cannot administer the human conscience. . . . People learn freedom not from political treaties but from their inner consciences. . . ." ⁸

Let a man stand and say, "God help me, here stand I. I can do no other," and let a man cry, "Give me liberty or give me death"—and the power of the spirit is resurrected. It is alive, and its magnetic force goes on.

You and I were created to be partakers of this power,

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sharers in the most wonderful of all adventures—that of the spirit. We are spirits. We were made for eternity. We have citizenship in the spiritual world.

Some indifferent onlookers at Calvary saw only an itinerant and eccentric teacher hang on a Cross between two thieves. Others, closer to Him, exclaimed in admiration at His courage and dignity. Some few were moved to murmur, "This is the Son of God." Yet others, who had walked with Him and loved Him, who were shattered at His cruel execution and ignominious burial, and who for a brief time may have felt that His wondrous visions and teachings would perish, came to see something else. They saw, in the radiance of Easter, that a spirit such as His does not die. They knew themselves called to His eternities. They knew He lived—and in His life they would find Life Eternal too.

The proof of it, in part, is that, no matter what your background or motive may be, you do respond to evidences of spirit force. The proof is in the fact that you are capable of listening and understanding what sacrifice and forgiveness and generosity and integrity and freedom mean. You are capable of responding to the living Christ.

The repeated word of Jesus to you and me is, "Do something about it! Don't be indifferent!"

In C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, the Devil says to his nephew Wormwood, whom he is training for effective work in the world, "I, the Devil, will always see to it that there are bad men. Your job, my dear Wormwood, is to provide me with men who do not care." 9

There is an unquenchable power of the spirit in you and in me. Don't let it stay entombed by our indifference,

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or locked away from the path of life by our caution, our casualness, or our callousness.

It is the deepest, most exhilarating, most exciting fact in human history that the first-century Christians affirmed what was the glowing triumph of Jesus—He arose from the dead!

There is an undying truth for us all. It is that Christ is alive! The spirit of man can never be entombed! Christ's daring spirit walks this earth seeking kindred venturers. There is an abiding and lifting power in that spirit of His. And you have the proof in chasms of hatred that have been spanned by the conquering spirit of forgiveness. You have proof in the littleness of living redeemed and made great by sacrifice. You have the proof from history, that is alight with lamps of man's courage and devotion and integrity and faith because of His living presence.

Find it out. Know that it is true for you. Your life is the life of the spirit.

Jesus Christ is not dead. That Easter message of so long ago is saying to the deepest in you and me: "Oh soul, add to the proof, add to the fact that it's so, as you honor Him and as you let that spirit live in and through you!"

"For there shall arise false Christs . . . if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

MATTHEW 24:24

"The elect are whosoever will, and the nonelect, whosoever won't."

HENRY WARD BEECHER

XIV

MAN'S NEED TO BE AMONG THE ELECT

An elect person, or one elected, is one who is chosen, set apart, someone special. That word, "elect," or "election," appears more than twenty times in the Bible. In the Old Testament one frequently gets the idea that God has certain individuals who are His elect. Jesus is foretold as being one of their members. But the prophecy in the Book of Isaiah and other passages show the heart of God gladdened at any man's love and faith and loyalty: "Behold . . . mine elect, in whom my heart delighteth." ¹

The first thing to say about the elect is that every person has need to feel somehow special, to be among the chosen, or the saved. To have the sense that someone

delights in me, thinks me a person set apart, or admires a quality about me that's good or unique, strikes a responsive chord in me.

It is undeniable, this deep-seated longing to be in a special echelon, to be in the inner sanctum, to have one's name read off among the elect. Don't you hear it across history, spoken in a million voices and in a million ways? We hear it in infinite variations: "Mine is the true church," or, "My ancestors were on the Mayflower," or, "My mother is a champion bridge player," or, "Jones may have family connections, but he doesn't have my status and income." One finds it even in prayer: "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are . . . as this publican."²

Then there are unusually gifted people whose outstanding skill or grace moves us with admiration. So Robert Schumann was charmed and excited on discovering the mastery of Brahms. In an article, "New Paths," he spoke of his interest in finding fresh musical talent among aspiring artists: "He has come, this chosen youth, over whose cradle the Graces and Heroes seem to have kept watch. His name is Johannes Brahms; he comes from Hamburg, where he has been working in quiet obscurity, instructed by an excellent, enthusiastic teacher in the most difficult principles of his art, and lately introduced to me by an honored and well-known master. His mere outward appearance assures us that he is one of the elect."³

Even though such genius may not belong to you or to me, don't we wish that in some way, for some trait, skill, or accomplishment, such an accolade might be for us too?

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What shall we say of this constant need to be elect, special, unique?

The Bible takes up this problem, and, while serving our need on the secular level, moves into the deeper area where man feels his election by God. The Old Testament clearly states that God has His chosen people. It is shown that He has a vast universality of concern for all nations and peoples.⁴ Yet there is a selectivity. Some are called particularly, elected in a special way.⁵ Jesus is sent into the world to be the bridge between man and the divine. In His total ministry, He teaches of God's seeking to save the lost and, in His life and death, He seeks to call and lead men to full acceptance by God.

Paul and the later epistle writers are enchanted with the idea. They pick up the strand of thought and develop the concept that God, in His foreknowledge, predetermined some people to be among His elect, that in His ordering of things, there are some whom He has foreordained to a spiritual kingliness or queenliness. It is not man's doing, it is God's. That spiritual royalty, however, can be recognized by other men if they have eyes to see.

Now I don't want to go too far down the track of speculative theology toward the important stations of predestination, election, and free will. But there are three points concerning man's deep need to feel somehow special, to be among the elect that Jesus emphasized.

First is the teaching that God, in His infinite and universal mercy, is continually calling, seeking you and all men to enter the realm of the elect.⁶

God, in His infinite mercy, is calling us not once but

a hundred times. In the immortal Ten Commandments, given in fire and thunder from the mountaintop, He calls men to enter the ranks of the chosen. In the wisdom of the prophets and the sages is His calling.

"To everything there is a season . . . a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted." ⁷
 "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" ⁸
 In words such as these, which are typical of hundreds more, His wisdom reaches out to your need and spirit, seeking to gain a deeper affinity with you—seeking to lead you into the ranks of the spiritually splendid.

Then, in the crowning compassion of Jesus himself—"Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ⁹—your station is called that of the elect. It's the station for everyone, and God's mercifulness is calling us to get off here. Here's where we find our kinship. Here are the folk with whom we ought to be.

The second truth I find in the spirit of Jesus and the New Testament is that, while in God's mercy He wants us all to enter the kingdom of the spiritually elect, man must justify that election.

John Calvin applied his logical mind to this matter. Based on his careful study of Scripture, he came to some significant conclusions. In the first book of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, he says there are two things that are not incompatible: that man should be actuated by God, and yet, at the same time, be active himself. ¹⁰ Then, dealing with this profound and complex problem in his second book, he attests that God's loving redemption is free, without any exception, to all that seek it.

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But then he notes that those who seek it give evidence of being guided by God's heavenly grace. And he writes, "I am come, you say, by free will; I am come through my own choice. Why are you inflated with pride? Will you know that this also is given to you?" ¹¹

Yes, God actuates, but we must be active. But both are from God—both the actuation and the resultant action. This is a most important point. Man's activity is evidence of God's vitality flowing through us.

What does this mean? Doesn't it say that the gift of election may be yours? It is a free opportunity for you to take. Yet you must accept it. Both the offer and the acceptance are God's doings. Yet the action of offering, and the activity of accepting, has to be demonstrated through you.

To illustrate this more clearly, think of it this way. A child is born in a royal family. On birth, that infant is heralded as a prince, not through anything of his own doing. The time may come when he, again not of his own doing, is given the opportunity to ascend the throne as a king. Now he can abdicate. He can fail, if he enters the office, to fulfill it to its highest level. Or he can fill the office with vigor and honor. But mark this, everything from birth to death is the development of what was given him at the beginning.

Two passages of the Bible show the two sides of God's action. In I Peter are the words "*Elect* according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." ¹² Here is stated God's purpose, plan, call!

In Paul's letter to the Colossians is another facet of

that call: "Put on therefore, *as the elect* of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another . . . and above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." ¹³

Are you and I among God's elect? The answer is, everyone can be. What God has put in you is manifest, through your endeavor, in a life of greater gentleness and honor and justice and good will. Or, to put it in what for Calvin was inescapable logic, it is demonstrated as you let the spirit of God, prompted in you, manifest its quality through you.

The third point to make is that the delicate and precious office of the elected needs care and protection, just as the office of president or king is protected against enemies and crackpots. We must protect and nurture the finer impulses. We are to listen to the still, small voice.

There are innumerable forces that can tear down and destroy the delicate roots of faith and the sensitive tendrils of trust. The clear understanding and belief that God calls you for His own—a knowledge that doesn't beget pride, but the deepest humility—is a precious, health-producing insight. But the materialism of this world, the sneer of the skeptic, the dull erosions of mundane duty, and overconcern with the physical side of life—all this time can tear it away, cause it to be diminished, can keep it from flowing out and manifesting itself.

I am reminded of a painting by the sixteenth-century Flemish artist, Jerome Bosch. It is a small canvas, perhaps thirty by thirty-six inches, and bears the sobering

title, "The Last Judgment." When I saw it, it was hanging in a little gallery at Finch College in New York City. Dr. De Marco, president of the college, told me that before the exhibit opened the owner came in to check the painting and to approve its position. He sat before it for an hour and a half without saying a word—just studying that painting. Finally he said, "I've owned that painting for more than twenty-five years. It's hung in my home all the time, where I can see it daily. But I've never looked at it without seeing something different in it."

What is so fascinating about that painting of the Last Judgment? In the center is the figure of Christ. Above Him are the apostles and saints in cloud-filled upper areas of heaven. At one slightly less elevated area on one side of the canvas there is a plateau where are gathered the elect who have nearly reached the realms of bliss. But all the rest of the painting is a confused, interwoven series of complex and often gruesome contests between man and evil. There are all kinds of temptations and terrors portrayed. As you look closely you see what the temptations are—greed, gluttony, drunkenness, lust, indifference, pride, and others—all painted with startling clarity. The longer you look, the more vicious, demonic, frightening, are those forces that are tearing down what is the good. The lesson is borne home to the viewer's mind that it is a long, perilous way through this secular world to the place of the upper plateau and the ultimate bliss.

That strong painting speaks a deep truth we can never evade. The road of the soul is filled with all kinds of dangers. False Christs abound.¹⁴ To make the journey

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successfully requires continuous protection and arduous care.

Yes, God seeks to elect you and me. But, to put the same truth in another way, we must elect Him. Then, with the wisdom of the serpent and the patience of Job, we are to keep in His ways through this toilsome and tempestuous mortal life. And we can't escape this fact—that the crown of triumph is not given to those who start the race or who think about it. It is only achieved at the end.

In a conversation with a woman member of my parish, the question came up as to what makes a successful person. "The successful person," this fine woman said, "is one who helps God build a loving world." What an excellent formulation! I found that idea repeatedly going through my mind, and it increasingly tied itself up with this topic of election.

The true noblemen of this earth, the surely elected, are those who protect and show their royal origin and destiny by helping God build here a more loving world.

Into that hardy and exalted company, every one of us is called to enter.

“ . . . the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”

MATTHEW 25:10

*“Blessings ever wait on virtuous deeds,
And though a late, a sure reward succeeds.”*

WILLIAM CONGREVE

XV

MAN'S NEED FOR REWARD

“The bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.”¹ Let us go back more than nineteen centuries as observers of this scene as it could have happened in the days of Jesus.

Visualize a little Palestinian town with streets so narrow that two fully laden donkeys can scarcely pass each other. But there is no traffic now. The cries of the shopkeepers are stilled. Stopped is the noise of the metalworkers, the greeting of neighbors as they brush past each other on their rounds of daily business. The hour is late and it is dark.

But there appears in the distance the flickering glow from a burning torch. The light heightens expectancy as it casts its warm glow in the many caverns

of the night. It heralds the coming of a bridegroom and his friends.

We hear the banter and footfalls coming close, and those helping with the preparations for the wedding set the door ajar in welcome. Others are waiting outside, looking through the open door into the house. There the banquet table is set. Laughter and the sounds of jovial expectancy from within reach the watchers and the bridegroom coming down the little street.

The door is open. The bridegroom greets with gladness and restraint those who are waiting. They have come prepared, with lamps that are burning. He invites them into the house with him and the door is then closed.

The next scene shows others, who failed to bring sufficient oil for their lamps, which custom required be lighted to welcome the bridegroom. They run hither and yon looking for oil—which they will beg, borrow, or steal. When they get the needed oil and hurry back, they arrive too late. The door is closed.

Pity them if you will. But read in that story an elemental truth of life—that there are consequences for any action. There are rewards commensurate with the way one prepares, thinks, acts. These payoffs may be desirable or undesirable, but they come in ratio to our intent and deed: Prepare thoughtfully and adequately, and the door is open; dawdle foolishly, and the door is shut.

The Bible is saying two things to us. One, there are rewards. Two, the choices we make, the ends we seek, and the preparations we go through determine the kind of rewards we get. As we sow, so shall we reap.² Take your talent, whatever it is, and say, "I will conserve it."

Bury it in the ground and you will have a reward—but not to your liking. The law of life says “even that is taken away from you.”³ There are rewards; “the labourer is worthy of his hire.”⁴ Every duty you fulfill brings its satisfaction. Every worthwhile denial brings some appropriate dividend.

Say to yourself, “Every fine thought I put in my mind brings some recompense; every cross I carry with dignity and courage will bring a crown,” and you express Biblical teaching. There are rewards and there is recompense. Compensation is inevitable.

Compensation! You may recall Ralph Waldo Emerson’s classic essay on that topic. It was prompted in part by the fact that in church he listened to a clergyman *misinterpret* the Bible. He contended that it is in the future life that we get our reward. Emerson sat through the sermon and knew it wasn’t so; and he later wrote his great essay, “Compensation.”

In it he expresses that Biblical teaching which says that there is effect from every cause, there is payment that goes with every performance.

This truth that Jesus portrays so vividly in His story of the wise and foolish virgins is supported in a hundred areas of our human experience.

The Bible does not teach that we live on credit. God has so ordered things that we are paid off promptly. What we earn we get as we earn it—good or evil, heaven or hell, according to our choice and our preparation.

I have so often wished that in school my generation had been required to use the old copybook of a generation or two further back, in which young people wrote down thoughts to ponder. I would put in my copy-

book for living: "Watch your wants, for you'll get them."

That rule is worth elaboration. Watch, and decide carefully, what you really want from life—what rewards. Yes, watch carefully what they are, for *you will get them*. Life and God pass over the counter what we request. The transaction has a major completion, here and now!

As you set yourself to seek some high reward, there is a stimulus always to growth, and the satisfactions gained from going forward are themselves good reward.

Is it not true that even the most energetic and committed of us often betray a touch of laziness? Granted, there is in us a great deal more than that; there is within man a capacity to cast himself into disciplined and heroic mold. How proud and glad we should be of that. But we also possess a kind of liquid that, like water, easily runs down to the lowest level. What keeps us from moving one way or the other? There may be many motivations, but one of them is always among them, the quest of reward—be it in tangible or intangible form. It is the sense of compensation that motivates us, for good and evil alike.

You can readily see this in an adolescent boy. His parents and teachers and seniors may urge him to study because of the future competence it will give him. But that reward isn't alluring enough for this particular lad; it doesn't send him toward arduous scholarship. Yet, let parents say, "At the year's end, if your grades are satisfactory, we'll see that you get that old car you so admire at Mac's junkyard."

Suddenly, assignments of mathematics and history are met with greater interest and enthusiasm. And once

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on this path, our young man may well begin to respond to a new set of rewards—the kind held by his parents. His rewards for study begin to rise to a higher plateau.

In the church I serve, there are several choirs for children and young people. On the left breast of each child's choir robe is pinned a bar, or several bars. These bars vary in color, and some children wear also a small wooden cross below the colored markers. Each bar represents a year's cooperative participation in the choir program, and the cross represents five years. These rewards have little intrinsic value, but they are so highly prized and cherished that some children, on moving from our area, hopefully ask the choirmaster for permission to keep their choir robe bars. This request is always granted, for there is understanding of how deeply these symbols are treasured.

Now, I grant you, it's difficult to evaluate and judge. But those who are close to our choir program will agree that the rewards create greater interest and attendance. The small reward, to put it another way, assists in achieving our major purposes in the musical program, which are: to give children the experience of participation in the worship of God; to grow in the appreciation for beauty and order; and to have a healthy and deepening respect for the things of eternity. The tiny reward is a signal for some to achieve major spiritual growth.

Robert Herrick,⁶ three centuries ago, in his *Hesperides*, was expressing the truth we have before us now, when he said:

*Still to our gains our chief respect is had;
Reward it is that makes us good or bad.*

Our line of thinking, it seems to me, leads to two significant points: One, it is wise to see that some of the so-called good rewards do not pay off. Many of the outwardly appealing and glamorous rewards that this world values, may, on their achievement, not be as worthwhile as they appear from a distance.

Elbert Hubbard, writer-publisher of a generation past, said that he wished all men in this world might be rich so that they would discover the worthlessness of wealth. This may not be the testimony of the man who has made large material achievements, but I believe all who have will testify that there are limitations and problems in wealth.

Many is the individual who has labored toward some longed-for goal only to find that it wasn't worth all the effort. This is point one.

But let us stay with the second point a little longer. In the developing of life *toward spiritual ends*, in devoting our thought and concern toward spiritual things, there are rewards that are the most precious of all. Was there ever anyone in all human history, one in good mental and physical health, who said, "I set out to achieve in myself a good character, to build a life of usefulness and integrity, and I now attest that it wasn't worth it"? I doubt that in all human experience any individual with an unclouded mind and sound body could have said that.

True, at times of depression, there may be a momentary doubt. A glance of envy at others, whose aims are lower and who seem to be getting along swimmingly, may lead one to say, "I really wonder if I'm headed into a barren wasteland." But such doubt is drowned by

the thousands of voices, who, in tearful confession or in anguished regret, have cried, "Would to God I hadn't set out to get what I did get."

How terribly hard it is to counsel each other! We can know each other fairly well, be deeply sincere with each other, but we're so infinitely varied in the complexities of skill and temperament and requirement that our best friend likely has to say, "I reveal the depth of my friendship by not telling you what to do, what goal to set, what preparation to make."

Yet there is one area where our confident counsel can be given to each other without question. That is concerning the worth of the spiritual ends of life. "Seek wisdom! Make wisdom the goal of your life, and you'll never regret it." We can say that to each other without equivocation, or fear that our advice will not apply.

Work at possessing a radiance of spirit that can take whatever is given to you with courage and dignity and competence, and you'll never, never, never be sorry for any step you've taken along the way. Centuries of testimony from millions of lips affirm: "Yes, that is so!"

Let a loving attitude—one of intelligent tolerance, breadth, sympathy, and charity—be a goal in your life, and the rewards it brings will never tarnish. These things we can affirm without hesitation. On this score, Confucius, out of his long observation and rumination, affirmed, "He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own."⁶ And Robert Cecil, the sixteenth-century English statesman who became the first Earl of Salisbury, wasn't just engaged in a flight of poetic prose when he put his thought to paper, "He who sows, even with tears, the precious seed of faith and hope and

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love, shall come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him, because it is the very nature of that seed to yield a joyful harvest."

We are saying that God and life pay off promptly in terms of the investments we make, and not alone in the next stage of the soul. Here and now, there is an open door and an invitation to a party where, in attendance, one will never be let down. You'll never be ashamed you were there. Neither will you regret entering in at the open door to spiritual growth.

Those who keep the lamps of faith and charity and wisdom and kindness aglow are invited in. They have good fun and wonderful rewards.

*" . . . a wise man . . . built his house upon a rock:
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and
the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell
not. . . ."*

MATTHEW 7:24-25

"Every place is safe to him who lives with justice."

EPICLETUS

XVI

MAN'S NEED FOR SECURITY

Near the northern boundary of modern Israel, situated on the seacoast, is one of the world's most fascinating cities, bearing the name Acre. It is a natural port. It has had military, political, and commercial significance for thirty-five hundred years. Its history is the history of the Mediterranean and the Middle East. About 1500 B.C. Thutmose III of Egypt boasted that he had successfully assaulted and taken Acre. Later, the caravans of the Babylonians, rich with their commerce, came through the plain of Esdraelon, headed toward Asia Minor or Egypt. The king of Acre and his marauders went forth from their stronghold to plunder, and they were, for a time, a byword for murder and robbery.

Old Testament scholars and students familiar with

the history of the Middle East tell us that the story of Acre, to the end of the New Testament period, is a continuous panoply of the arrival of great men from Egypt, Asia Minor, the Greek Isles, Italy, and Spain. It is a record of large armies, of the invaders of the Syrian hinterland, and of bitter conflicts between the Greeks and the Jews. But the story doesn't end with the New Testament.

Herod entertained Caesar there. Paul the apostle was there. During the Crusades, Baldwin I captured it in 1104, but Saladin retook it in 1187. After two brutal years of siege, it fell to Richard the Lionhearted in 1191. It successfully resisted the assaulting forces of Napoleon in 1799. But in 1832 it was captured by the bold Egyptian Ibrahim Pasha.

Acre! As I saw its aging fortifications, its vast walls and crumbling ramparts—some of them fifteen feet thick—and recalled these fragments of history, I thought of how this place had been sought and cherished as a refuge. It appeared to me to prove that there is an irradicable need in man for a place of sanctuary.

For hundreds of years Acre has been held dear, as have its counterparts in thousands of other places of the world. It represents a place where one could be less fearful of the enemy charging with his club or spear or crossbow or gun or his cannon. True, its defenses and those of hundreds of other decaying fortifications throughout the world—the great China Wall, the Maginot line—now appear inadequate before the weapons of the modern world. Yet Acre, and others like it, tell, in symbol, of a deep need in man for security. Don't we all desire some place that is not vulnerable to destruction—

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a protective place that gives sanctuary from either the fury of the elements or the vicious assaults of men?

To be secure from the attack of enemy forces is but one of many securities we may wish for. We need security from cold and hunger and nakedness. Man everywhere needs security from poverty, from the sense of uselessness. Every man in all this world needs the secure sense that his person is protected from assault. You and I have deep discomfort until not only our person but our property is honored and made secure.

Jesus recognized this deep need, and He spoke of it time and again. There is, for instance, the parable in which He spoke of a house! One man, He said, put his house in an accessible and appealing spot. He selected a dry wadi, or stream bed. The land was flat. The sand was amenable to his plans. It was a wonderful place to build his house. If someone had asked about putting it at a higher elevation, he might have responded, "It's too much effort to build on the upper reaches. I don't have the resources or time or the inclination to establish it on the rocks." But then, when the flash storms came, as they do in that part of the world, when the great winds howled across the deserts and the plateaus and the clear skies darkened in angry violence, and the wadi became a roaring torrent, the weak sand was washed away. The lack of foundation for that house made it splash into the flood, twisted and broken, "and great was the fall of it." ¹

Then Jesus went on to speak of another man, one who had an eye to the future and was thoughtful. He was willing to pay the price for something that would really stand, and that man anchored his house on a rock. It

was more trouble, to be sure! More effort, more time, more expenditure, true! But that house could take it. It stood up before the blasting winds, the driving rain, and even the rise of the destructive waters. It fell not!

How down-to-earth Jesus was in His teaching! How understanding! He knew that every man would want to have his life that way, like a house, solid on the rock, a building that would hold up no matter what the blows of circumstance might be.

One man in our times might confess, "One of my deep needs is to have a sense of security in my vocation, my job." Another might say, "My deepest need is a sense of security with my family." Still another person might say, "I need security about faith and religion," or, "I need security in getting along with other people," or, "My fear is for our nation. I want the feeling that we are secure against attack." And Jesus would answer that He understands, that that is what He is talking about, that your confessions are the contributions of everyone.

Food, clothing, shelter—these are needs of every man, and Jesus knew it.² He told us to be attentive to these—to see that the naked are clothed and the hungry fed. One of the marks of our Christianity is to protect the sojourner from the buffets of the long, hard journey and to give sanctuary to the stranger from afar.

But Jesus knew, too, that there are needs that go deeper than these; they are of spiritual quality. Man can tremble, can be afraid. The body can be fed and clothed and sheltered—and the heart can still be anxious with a hundred fears and insecurities.

So the question, "How can I build a life that's like that house on the rock?" is still unanswered until one

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deals with the mind and the spirit. How can I create such an Acre, firm-founded, that will be able to withstand the quirks of circumstance, the strains of the unexpected, no matter from where they come? How can I build the house of my mind, my spirit, so that it will never be shaken?

Jesus is so clear. He is so immediate. The question is anticipated, and an answer is promptly given: "*Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.*"³

Hear His words and do them!

What are the particular guiding words to which He refers? Perhaps there are none that are to be excluded. But those that are in the particular section with the parable of the two houses must be especially relevant.

We should read the entire Sermon on the Mount.⁴ It takes about ten minutes. There are His words. But let's now take only a portion of these words, namely, the seventh chapter of Matthew, and listen to what they say. Here are His thoughts, some of His words with which you and I can erect a sturdy spiritual abode.⁵

One of the young fathers in my community one day said to us, "I wish that at a Sunday morning session of the church school there would be just one clear thought or principle given to the children." He went on to add that he'd like the same idea applied in the sermon. There would then be a main point to take home and live by during the coming week.

This most commendable suggestion cannot be followed here. For one thing, there are several thoughts in even this brief passage from Jesus. But as we look at this

cluster of ideas, I hope you will do what my friend suggested. Center on and take one that may be particularly applicable in your life. Doing something about just one idea can assist you in building your spiritual security: "He that heareth these words and doeth them is like a man whose house is on the rock."

One of the thoughts in that seventh chapter of Matthew is, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." ⁶

This injunction raises an interesting question. What possible connection can there be between judgment and the development of spiritual security?

Let's look at this analytically! Who is the insecure, vulnerable, and fearful person? Is it the individual who is quick or careless in his judgment, or the one who usurps the role of judge?

How secure is the murderer, the thief, the robber? They made judgment on their fellow men saying, "I will not respect or honor them. I will use them. I will take from them what I can!" Is there not a judgment hanging over the heads and lives of such? "Will I be found out?" What a terrible insecurity in that question! It is a guillotine that can't be evaded by the individual who makes a vicious judgment on mankind. In his judging he is judged.

To fill this role properly, society has taken centuries to create and control the office of the judge. To that office is appointed an individual of training and competence, a strong man, a man above reproach. It has to be such a one to sit on the bench and judge. Reared in a lawyer's family, I know that the judge must approach his responsibility with the deepest of awe. Those judges who have spoken their minds attest that it is a moving

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and difficult experience—one to challenge the best of the mind and stir the soul—to stand in judgment of one's fellow men, since "There but for the grace of God, I could be standing."

The secure house on the rock isn't possible for the individual who thinks he can assume the role of the judge. Let him look with suspicion and condemnation on his fellow men—the dark birds he sends out have a way of coming home to roost.

Jesus tried to drive home this thought by adding the picture of a man criticizing a splinter-sized flaw in a fellow man, when his own flaw was the size of a timber. Don't look at the faults of your fellow men. We all have faults and flaws. In comparison to the speck in your neighbor's eye, you may have a beam-sized one in your own eye. First straighten out yourself. That's job enough to handle in this world. Get the beam out of your own eye. Then you'll really begin to see clearly—not to condemn, but to help your brother cast out the mote from his own eye.⁷

Where can I build a life of security? I begin doing it when I look at my fellow men with tolerance, with a breadth of sympathy, with a great restraint regarding judgment. "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

Here's another word from the sparkling diadem in Matthew's seventh chapter: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."⁸ Do you hear this word saying to you, Guard what to you is precious, what is holy! Don't expose your finest sentiments to the raucous, to the casual, to the savage. Jesus must have had in mind the vicious half-wild

dogs of Palestine and the semidomesticated pigs that roamed and foraged about outside the villages.

In His own life Jesus illustrated that He tried to apply this counsel. He stood before the probing of Pilate and the hissing antagonism of the mob, and He said not a word. When, before Herod, there was an attempt to make a circus of the occasion and a mockery of Him, again He showed superb restraint. He did not expose that which was sacred to Him before malevolent opposition and ignorance. Treasure and guard that which is most meaningful to you!

Christ's security was great, as can be yours and mine, as we hold with reverence our innermost thoughts. What folly to jabber like a magpie of the deepest assurances of our heart with the chance acquaintance, the light-headed neighbor. Their negativism can dull the luster of your best. And this Jesus wanted us to know—that no one in this world can ever fully understand exactly what has happened to you and how you have regarded it.

The child, finding a bright-colored stone in the creek bed, has a treasure that is his alone. "Wow! It may be worth a fortune. It may have magical powers!" My daughter, at age seven, was given a "Herkimer diamond" from upstate New York. It was "real." It was "wonderful," a treasure to put in the safest place! But an individual, unsympathetic or unknowing, could crush that child by saying, "That rock of yours isn't worth anything." As much as I, and other members of the family, entered into the delight of our daughter, the joy of her valued gift was uniquely hers. I could "feel with her" only in part.

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So it is with our spiritual perceptions, the tender nuances of experience that give meaning—these can be shared only with our most intimate comrade on the adventure of life. Hold onto and guard the pearls of hope and faith and love and truth that you possess. Let them go casually or carelessly in the wide stream of other men's opinion, and that which is an important source of your security can be washed away.

Once again, He said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." ⁹ Isn't this a sun-flooded crystallization of all profound thinking and philosophy? We repeat it so often—and yet we don't repeat it enough. We hear it—but we don't let it apply enough in our own lives. How many rebellions in family life, revolutions in history, can be traced to the failure to heed those words, "to others as yourself."

"Whoso heareth . . . and doeth." Doeth? Yes, there has to be more than listening. Live by it, believe in it, and you are building your life on a rock that won't be assaulted and can't be taken.

The people I've known who have lived with impregnable security have proved it so. The annals of time are made bright by their names: Julius Caesar, Francis of Assisi, Florence Nightingale, Abraham Lincoln, Albert Schweitzer, Asoka of India, Kagawa of Japan, to name a few.

The point is well illustrated by an incident on the Lewis and Clark expedition. As they moved up toward the continental divide, the expedition faced a perilous situation. Food supplies were low. Winter was coming on. It was important that they make contact with the Shoshone Indians. Clark had forged on ahead, but failed

to find them. Lewis, finally ranging far beyond the previous exploration, did come upon the Shoshones. Having never before seen a white man, they were suspicious. The opening of the Northwest hung in that moment on the tiny thread of one man's attitude as he stood before fearful and hostile savages. It is reported that he talked to them with dignity and candor. He gave them full details concerning his party which was behind—that they had an Indian woman with them whose name was Sacajawea. He was honest. He was clear. He was quiet and respectful.

The results of his famed expedition might have ended in disaster but for his candor and the eventual verification of his statements as some of the Indians visited the expedition's camp. Meriwether Lewis lived by the principle that it was good to do as he would have wanted to be done by.

Our nation needs this very teaching about security. If we want to contribute to the building of a secure world, if we want to have a citizenship that is united and confident and strong, we must tell the truth to each other and to the world. There's no security otherwise.

Once again, Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate . . . narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life."¹⁰ What is the nub of this teaching? He is saying that the way to spiritual splendidness is not easy. It can't be gained at a cheap price. The religious teacher who tells us otherwise is a false prophet. It takes continuous prayer and thought and discipline to develop a holy life. If you shy off from "holy," make it a "secure" or "strong" or "happy" or "useful" life! The choice and cultivation of the best, God knows and we do too, lead to strength and

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victory. But be undisciplined in your habits, disloyal in your actions, dishonest in your talk, indifferent to a generous goal in living, and you are on the broad way to destruction. The house of an individual life, or that of a nation, without a hard-bedded foundation on justice and integrity and constructive purpose is not worthy of standing. It must fall. History will have it no other way.

Francis Galton, one of the fine scientific minds of England, said, "I have always made it a habit to pray before writing anything for publication that there may be no self-seeking in it, and perfect candor, together with respect for the feelings of others."

Such a spirit is building a firm house that stands. It has security when the storms come and the winds blow. No self-seeking, perfect candor, respect for the feelings of others. God helping us, let such a life be one to which we continuously rededicate ourselves. We'll satisfy one of our deepest needs as we do.

*" . . . those things which proceed out of the mouth
come forth from the heart; and they defile the man."*

MATTHEW 15:18

*"Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your
own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall
have the suffrage of the world."*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

XVII

MAN'S NEED FOR INTEGRITY

After two thousand years of reading the Bible, it is remarkable that men should continue to find some fresh thought speaking through it. There are new veins of gold to be found in the old mine. Particularly is that the case with the words of Jesus. In just reading them again, and perhaps pausing to savor them, one frequently finds an unexpected shining of spiritual gold. After a quarter of a century in the ministry, I find continuous new twists or fresh aspects to His sayings that I never sensed before.

Take, for instance, these words: "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man." ¹ Give a little thought to it and you notice that what Jesus says is at variance with the widely

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accepted thesis that man is a result of his environment; that we are made, one way or another, by what happens to us on the outside. This is not true, Jesus affirms. The major thing is how we handle what is within ourselves, what we permit to come from the inside to the outside. Not the food we eat alone, nor the circumstances that smash against our lives, but what we let come out—it is this that defiles us, it is this that determines what we are.

Are these words saying, and do they mean, that the sordidness you and I can see about us need not enter into us? Do these words mean that I can live with men who do evil, and that their evil need not taint my own thought and action? I am sure Jesus is saying these things.

Does He mean that I can live in a society where dishonesty is a commonplace and yet can conduct my life with honesty and honor? Yes, He does mean that! Jesus is saying that the force determining our thought and conduct is not outside us but within us.

This truth, as I see it, is speaking to a deep need within every man—the need to feel that one's best self, what we most deeply and inwardly are, is self-contained and unsullied. No matter what happens to me on the outside, my inner self-reliance, control, and integrity remains unshaken and unsubdued—that is a powerfully satisfying affirmation to make! Isn't this a deep, inner spiritual hunger of man? To have clean hands and a pure heart in a mudslinging world, to live where hypocrisy and compromise can always be pointed out, and yet to have the sense that one's actions are above reproach and one's intentions honorable—this is a need within us all.

Let someone cry:

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*In the fell clutch of circumstance,
I have not winced or cried aloud;
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*²

Let an individual so exemplify an inner, unconquered integrity—and doesn't he have our unqualified regard? Isn't it true that we long for what he has—the retention of an inner integrity that will never be broken by what happens on the outside?

Ovid, writing when Jesus was a little boy, affirmed: "A God has his abode within our breast; when he rouses us, the glow of inspiration warms us; this holy rapture springs from the seeds of the divine mind sown in man." ³

At his best and truest moments, every man knows that he has something of the divine within him. And isn't it true, too, that one of the deep needs is to let this fine, inner self not be sullied or overcome by what is on the outside?

But this passage of Jesus reveals also the wise understanding that there is a dark potential in man as well as light. Not so much from the outside, but from the inside, come evil thoughts and murder and false witnessing and blasphemy.⁴ True, we can say that all the water of the seven seas can't sink one little ship unless it gets inside it. This is so because there can be a resistance and a resilience that thwarts and holds back this external pressure of the black waters. But there is also an inherent weakness that can, in time, succumb to the pressures. One seam, without continuous calking, can crack. The

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water can break through. The ship can sink. But mark this: It is always the inward strength or the inward failure that determines whether the outward pressures force themselves in and conquer.

Jesus truly understood that man is a complex creature. Hidden in man's unconscious are the sources of force that can make him express either good or evil. What Jesus was advocating was a technique for strengthening the one nature as over against the other. As we express ourselves in good words, we not only give life to the good in the external world and keep ourselves from outward defilement, but we also strengthen the source of that good within. This is comparable to the delicate synaptic connections in our nervous system: As we respond in a particular way, the delicate nerve ends over which the impulse travels come closer together, the pattern of response is set more surely.

A young lieutenant named William G. Farrow, one of the famed Doolittle flyers, must have so cultivated and conditioned the "good potential" within himself. He wrote a letter, which was found after the fall of Japan in World War II.⁵ The words were put down just before he was executed with two of his flying companions. To those to whom his heart was bound, his family, close friends, he said on paper, "Don't let this get you down. Just remember God will make everything right. Read *Thanatopsis* by Bryant if you want to know how I'm taking this. My faith in God is complete, so I am unafraid."

Out of the mouth, this fine affirmation of trust and strength! Out of the mouth, no railings or cursings, no screams for mercy. Instead, strength and faith and courage from an inner integrity that must, in that young

man's life, have been given constant ascendancy. Not what awful destruction was going to happen from without, but what came out from within—this revealed Lieutenant Farrow's nature and character.

"I'd like to have, I want—no, I *really need*—some inner integrity that can express itself, that will be there, clean and strong, no matter what happens." This must have come to that young man, as it can only come for all, with patience, with the cultivation of a trust in God.

At this time in America's history, many are rereading the records of the Civil War. I'm sure that, amid all the materials that are being put before us, one thing is sure: that the stature of Lincoln has increased and probably will continue to increase. How stalwart that man stood, how strong, when passions flared and hatreds pushed this nation into the holocaust of civil strife. There is an insight, I believe, into the source of some of his fine-grained inner integrity in a little talk of less than two hundred words which he gave as he was leaving Springfield, Illinois, to take up his responsibilities as chief executive in Washington.

Standing alone on the back of the train platform, he said to the people of Illinois gathered before him:

My friends, to this place and the kindness of these people, I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him, I cannot succeed. With that assistance, I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain

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with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.⁶

It was a rainy, cold, and cheerless day when he so spoke. But his words of grace and confidence were not moved or prompted by the outward weather, either social, political, emotional, or physical.

The inner integrity of Lincoln, great and good and strong to withstand the hurricanes of violent opposition and the bloody fortunes of war—Where did it come from? How was it achieved? Did it not come from the continuing cultivation of an inner faith, a trust in an eternal and providential Right?

The inner well of integrity was constantly refreshed and purified with the pure waters of everlasting righteousness, and the fact that it came out, that it was spoken, strengthened what was within.

One of the shames of the magnificent city of Florence is that in its streets Savonarola, a preacher of integrity who called men to try to live close to God and who spoke out against the frumpiness of ecclesiasticism, was tried and made to recant under cruel torture, and then was martyred on the gibbet in the Piazzia Signoria.

A bishop tore off his simple robe and cried at him, "Thus do I sever you from the Church Militant and the Church Triumphant."

And Savonarola replied in a loud voice, "Not the Church Triumphant. You can not do that." As the fire surrounded his body and that of his companions dying with him, the flames must have burned the thongs that

bound his arms, for the last action the people of Florence saw him commit, through the smoke and the flame, was to lift one hand in blessing and benediction.

There, again, is pictured an inner integrity based on a faith, cultivated by a searching for and alignment with the Everlasting God.

Does the recitation of acts of such heroes among the race of men make this matter seem far withdrawn from you and me? It certainly should not! They are cited merely to illustrate the potential character that resides in every man, waiting to be developed.

What was in such men is in you! What you and I let come out of ourselves determines more and more, as it did with them, which side of our nature will inwardly be strengthened.

I can swear in one moment today, but doing so makes it easier to curse tomorrow. I may say it is things on the outside that call this invective forth. That is only true in part. In the jarring hurt of the day may be a temptation to rant and rail. But I don't really allow the events to defile me till I shriek against them. This is what dirties me, stirs up and strengthens my weakness, makes the darker side of my nature freer to do the same thing on another occasion.

You and I can indulge in negative gossip about a person or a situation, and the destructive powers latent in our nature are fed as we make our derogatory comments. It is not what comes in, it is what we let go out, that feeds back and makes the cancerous growth of negativism take a deeper hold in our nature.

As I write of this basic matter, a delightful person comes to mind. She is a woman who now is nearing

"the great-grandmother stage." As one of her great many friends, I can say that to my knowledge there has never passed her lips one mean or unkind word. I have seen her grow in stateliness of spirit, as well as radiant loveliness of appearance, across the years.

Something of the source of her secret was revealed at a time of trouble and controversy in an association of which she was a major officer. In a meeting charged with heat and antagonism, she kept quietly and firmly directing the thinking of those involved to the questions, What are the constructive things we have done? What is the wisest thing to do now? What are the best things to plan for the future? One who was present at the occasion said, "Her insistent, practical point of view kept us on the right track."

That attitude indeed may be called practical. But it is one that lines up, and controls for fine growth, the deepest psychic resources in our being.

Thus, this observation of Jesus relates to a truly down-to-earth matter, which is to watch what we say and take great care in how we express ourselves.⁷

You can get up in the morning and growl, "It's a nasty day. I doubt if I can drag myself through it. There are so many unpleasant things I have to do. I'm tired and already disgusted." Say that, let it come out, let it be expressed—and as you articulate it, isn't it true that the will to be affirmative and confident is immediately weakened?

But let yourself say, "This day is a day of good tidings,⁸ given to me through no action of mine. God's spirit is going to be with me and I'm going to be glad. I shall be at ease, attentive, quiet, competent. I will do

what I have to do, and I'll do it properly." You can't say that without disciplining in yourself that same kind of inner integrity one admires in a Lincoln or a Savonarola.

There is a way that each of us can make a wholesome contribution to a better social climate and society. This is suggested in a thought of the apostle Paul, which is closely related to the observation of Jesus: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." ⁹

The education of the better part of our subconscious is possible. Think strong thoughts. Let conscious affirmations be made. Break undesirable feelings and reactions by a repeated dedication to restraint, self-control, kindly responses. You do become a new person. The hold of the destructive side of your nature weakens while the better side grows into health and vigor.

The unique and valid reminder of Jesus should be recalled time and again. Achieve that inner renewal, not by a primary concern about what may happen on the outside, not by what you take in, but by what you give out, by expressing the fine life that lies slumbering in your soul. Let the wondrous capability for love and grace and wisdom and power that is within you come out.

A miracle then takes place. As you express such attitudes, the cistern does not run dry as you take from it. Rather, a spring flows more freely and strongly and purely. Behold, you find more and yet more of that clarity and strength within.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works. . . ." MATTHEW 5:16

*"He traveled here, he traveled there;
But not the value of a hair
Was head or heart the better."*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

XVIII

MAN'S NEED OF DIRECTION

In India a few years ago I had occasion to study the writings and see the influence of Sri Ramakrishna. That "modern Protestant within Hinduism" once wrote, "There is little chance of a ship running amiss, so long as its compass points toward the true north." He went on to affirm that if the mind of man, "the compass needle of the ship of life," is constantly turned toward the Hindu ideal, "it will steer clear of every danger."¹

I like that picture of the ship, the sea, the voyage of life. Its symbolism is meaningful. It is one that appealed to Jesus² and fits well as the vehicle for some things He said about the direction for living.

I am inclined to think that there is no one, including any young person, who vehemently rebels against authority, who, deep within himself, won't admit, "I need

to have a sense of direction. I really want someone to tell me which way to point the ship of my life."

Isn't it true that cruising toward some clear destination is a deep desire in us all? In this voyage called life, doesn't every one of us want a voyage that counts for something?

Elbert Hubbard, in his study some years back in East Aurora, New York, was thinking about the great men in history. Pondering the qualities that made their lives significant, he used something of our analogy of the ship as he put down on paper these counsels: "Do not fear being misunderstood and never waste a minute thinking about your enemies. Try to fix firmly in your mind what you would like to do, and then without violence of direction you will move toward that goal."

He continued, "Fear is the rock on which we split and hate is the shoal on which many a bark is stranded. When we are fearful, the judgment is as unreliable as the compass of a ship whose hold is full of iron ore; and when we hate, we have unshipped the rudder; and if we stop to meditate on what the gossips say, we have allowed a hawser to befoul the screw." ³

Is there anyone who doesn't respond to such straight and simple thinking? Why? Because Hubbard is talking about direction! He gives an optimistic and splendid vision of life. How wonderful to be free of fear and hate! What a worthy goal toward which to move! Tell me about affirmative thoughts, wide concepts, and a joyous faith that makes me feel that during this life I can be in harmony with all the forces of this universe, and I will listen. And so will you.

Like the little coral insect that appropriates from the

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running tide what it needs to fulfill its purpose, so we too will move forward, achieving what our direction calls us to achieve. Tell us that, Elbert Hubbard, and you have our attention. You have given us some fine landmarks to guide us toward the desired harbor, and we are grateful!

The master of all time in helping men fulfill this need for direction is Jesus of Nazareth. Ask the elemental question, "How can I make the voyage of my life a good one?" and He answers you in dozens of clear condensations of wisdom that, to keep our nautical analogy, are lighthouses and channel markers.

Here are but three for special savoring, as we think about the navigation of our lives. Though taken almost at random from the Gospel of Matthew, they have particular point. The first, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works." Once again, "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." And the third, ". . . they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." ⁴

The common interpretation of "let your light so shine" is "do good in this world. Let the light of that good living illumine the path of others." The Christian's actions are to be demonstrations of his faith. For Leo Tolstoy the so-called Christians of his day were unconvincing, because "only actions, proving their conception of life to have destroyed the fear of poverty, illness, and death, so strong in myself, could have convinced me." ⁵ As far as Tolstoy could see, the Christian, whose radiant life is to glorify God and bless men, was missing the harbor.

But those words of Jesus touch a prior condition. The life of man can't turn into an illustrious voyage un-

less he believes it can be done, and unless he has a sense of vision that it will be done. One of the stumbling blocks I see in some men's lives is that they don't believe they were meant to be included in this company of "shining lights." They undersell themselves in their initial concept of themselves.

This word of Jesus is speaking to that temper. It says to keep looking forward, keep the distant view. Let your eyes be searching for and believing in the distant shore. Point the craft that is you toward some far port, and move there filled with confidence and with hope. Believe that there is a "shiningness" you can achieve, and which will give light for others!

Isn't it true that any and every worthwhile life has had such a sense of moving ahead—not a static contentment with now, but rather a radiant confidence in a better tomorrow, a tomorrow when life will shine with worth and accomplishment?

Samuel Johnson was struggling with a tiny school in an English village. He came to a decision, and with his one reliable pupil, David Garrick, he pulled up stakes from their restricted bailiwick, Lichfield, and went up to London. It was a distant vision. They must have appeared as unimpressive country bumpkins in those early days in the vast and exciting city. This mattered little. They were held by a lure of the future; and because of this, each left a bright legacy in his own field.

Samuel Johnson—what a sparkling and, at times, sharp wit he bequeathed to all readers! There is the response he made to Boswell, who had been singing the praises of a Quaker woman preacher. Looking with a dour eye at his friend and expressing doubt about his

contention, Johnson added that a woman preacher, and a Quaker at that, must be like a dog walking on his hind legs—it could never be done very well. But the surprising thing was that it was done at all. Johnson, with his humor, his satire, his sharpness, his delightful literary gifts—a bright light indeed!

Garrick made an imperishable name in the theater. At Garrick's death, when he was sixty-three, Johnson, who was then seventy, wrote, ". . . that stroke of death . . . has eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure." So it was. In their fields, perhaps far withdrawn from most of ours, they were yet operating on a universal principle that a worthy light does shine in a man's life as he holds a vision of that light and directs his energies toward it.

We Americans cannot remind ourselves too often that our nation was created by a multitude of men and of women who dreamed of a better tomorrow for themselves and their children. Therefore, is it not valid to add that this country will only continue to be vital as it believes in and continues to move onward toward an even wider role in the history of mankind?

Our national purpose should be stated and known by every American. What are we for? If it is the *status quo*, the maintenance of our corporate life with its present flaws uncorrected, our dreams of equality of opportunity forgotten, then we are doomed. There will be little light shining from us before the world.

What is our far destiny? Is it "liberty and justice for all"? Professor Galbraith incisively commented, "Were the Russians to disappear from the world, or become overnight as tractable as church mice, there would re-

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main vast millions of hungry and discontented people in the world.”⁶ This American ship of state, grown greater, must set a grand motto at its masthead and sail forth on the mission to which we have been committed, not just for ourselves, but mankind—justice and freedom *for all!*

Good works! Let your light shine—whether it be in an individual life or a nation. Is it not true that these are direction markers that denote true worth and give illumination for others?

The mother at the kitchen sink revealed it as she said to a friend, “I want my daughter to go to college so she’ll have something to think about when she’s doing her housework.”

It is the expansion of emotion and intellect that separates life from existence, distinguishes the craft rotting in a stagnant bay from the one biting the waves as it moves its cargo onward. How can it be done without a sense of direction toward the future? Let a worthy one say to us, “This is the way. Visualize your life as being useful, constructive. Let your light shine. Let men see your good works,” and who among us doesn’t respond?

Someone, however, may interject, “But doesn’t man also resent being told?” There is a strain of contrariness in human nature that itches to cross the street when the red light is showing; that wants to argue with authority; and that, uncontrolled, can crucify the Christ. But what young person, chafing at the restraining rules of his parents, doesn’t at the same time want that definite direction? Like the fascinating Gulf Stream that flows on unseen in the vast ocean, untroubled by surface storms, its direction unchanged—so within the deeper strata of

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man there is a responding to the voice of authority that says, "This is the way. Follow it and you will have life."

Yes, sadly, Christ may be crucified. But man's remorse at his treason to what He truly needed and loved is shown in the subsequent homage given the crucified through the centuries.

There is an authenticating inner voice that responds affirmatively to the reliable and firm-spoken pilot: "Yes, I know the future vision you offer is right. There will be a good voyage and a coming to the best harbor. I want to live that way. Sign me on the crew!"

There was in our founding fathers a continuing study of the past. They learned that real greatness, individually and in society, came as there was the widest opportunity for service. "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." The good society must be one in which each individual's drive for usefulness finds no doors closed.

Among the legends of Charlemagne is one concerning the birth of Ogier, the son of Geoffroy, the early king of the Danes. The legend reads that there came into the infant's chamber many beautiful fairylike ladies. One took the infant in her arms and, laying her hand on his heart, said, "I give you to be the bravest warrior of your times." The second said, "I give you abundant opportunities to display your valor." The third exclaimed, "Sister, you have given him a dangerous boon; I give him that he shall never be vanquished." The fourth added, "I give you the gift of pleasing." And the fifth said, "Lest all these gifts serve only to betray, I give you sensibility to return the love you inspire." 7

The history of Ogier is one of many conquests and

trials. He became a magnificently robust knight, a man of nobility and valor. But the markers of his life, which held him on the course, came from these early streams of mystical blessing.

The reason, I think, that legend and myth are significant, and should not be lost from our memories, is that they teach us about ourselves. This story about Ogier is saying something about you and me. Such potential endowments are placed deep in you at your earliest origin. The capacity for courage—the occasion always will come to show it. The capacity never to be vanquished, to keep on struggling, unsubdued, no matter what occurs—that is not a potential gift just for Ogier, the great knight. It is a gift that is in you and yours. The multiple gifts of being pleasing to your fellows and of returning the lovingness you inspire in others—these are buried in your potential. They provide the markers for helping your life to be great in service.

If the mists shroud the future, if at times no one can give you some concept of a glorious and a better tomorrow, remember this: There are guideposts from the past by which you can find the way that is effective and the line that will bring you to peace. One never to be doubted is: "He that is greatest . . . shall be your servant."

But, in any voyage, there are times when there are no visible markers at all—no lighthouse, no buoys to demark the channel. The spiritual voyager gets the direction once again through spiritual stocktaking. "Where am I now in my life? How has it been—the way I've come? What have I learned? Am I, before the vision

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Christ gives me of the future, too self-centered, too filled with self-pity? How can the rest of the voyage be made in a more satisfactory way?"

Lin Yutang says that, in the Taoist view of life, the developed man is one who believes he hasn't succeeded when he has. But also, though he knows he has failed, he will not bow in remorse and whine, "I have failed completely." ⁸

This is expressive of the thought Jesus is trying to convey to us—that the Christian must pause in this journey of life and take inventory. Yes, he's made some progress, but the voyage has not ended. There are many moorings still to be made. He's had some failures, but it hasn't been all bad. He's learned a great deal. He now knows that successes and failures in this world are not absolute or ultimate. He sees more clearly the difference between serenity and idleness. He knows the difference between a full life and overwork. He knows that there are consequences and that there are payoffs. The time of quiet gives opportunity for that truth to sink into the deeper strata of his being. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." ⁹ "He which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." ¹⁰

And he finds his bearings once again. In quietness the markers of the future are evaluated more surely, and those from the past that are strong and good are remembered. The mariner knows where he is, where he's been, and where he's going. The sky clears. The air freshens. The voyage goes on.

"Let your light so shine." "He that is greatest . . . shall be your servant." "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Old landmarks, guides for our

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direction? Yes, they are. They are as old as the wisest direction finder of all. But they are directions that can give any life the sense of a fresh and a wonderfully good voyage.

" . . . and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

MATTHEW 9:2

"It is part of the cure to wish to be cured." SENECA

XIX

MAN'S NEED FOR HEALING

The word "healing" means "to make whole." It means to restore to health, into a sound and whole condition, someone who has not been in that state. All of us who know pain, who have suffered from disease—be it physical, mental, or spiritual—need wholeness. What person who is ill doesn't want healing above all else?

A virus takes hold of your physical nature and gains mastery over some of your normal functions. Bodily temperature rises; physical discomfort increases; lassitude sets in; and you need the healing skill of the physician. You become frightened, or discouraged, or depressed, or you are infected by a debilitating sense of guilt. Energies that should contribute to the soundness of your being are thwarted, depleted, diffused. You then need the power of mental and spiritual healing to bring yourself into harmony again.

Face with me this vast, universally interesting and

complex matter of physical, mental, and spiritual healing. Centering our attention on Jesus, that great minister to man's needs, let us ask four direct questions:

- (1) Did Jesus heal when He was here on earth?
- (2) Why did He do it? (3) How did He do it? and
- (4) Can we be healed today?

First, Did Jesus heal when He was here on earth?

In the four Gospels, which record His life and acts, there are twenty-six instances in which He healed individuals of various types of sickness and disease. In addition, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention ten further instances in which He healed "large numbers of people,"¹ rather than just single individuals.

To take the position that these references to healing are somehow spurious and didn't really happen is untenable.

There is the plain fact of the many references to Jesus' healing. One might try to make a case that the bitter words He spoke, or is reported to have spoken, excoriating the Pharisees and the publicans, are not authentic. He was such a kind, such a loving, such a gentle man, one may argue, that He just couldn't have called men "hypocrites," "whitened sepulchres," or driven the money-changers from the temple.² Or one may say, "There are things that He said or did that I don't understand. They don't jibe with modern thinking or the contemporary scene, and therefore I'll disregard them." Or one may say, "I'm a rationalist. I don't believe in healing by any means other than physical. Therefore any reference to Jesus' spiritual healing is something I will dismiss." But such a case totters before the fact that it is very much a part of the record. The

portrait of Him as being capable of denunciation, as uttering at times abstruse truth, as healing various ills of man is as much a part of the record as any other item. The instances of restoring men and women to health are recorded as frequently in Mark, the earliest of the Gospels, as they are in any other.

Jesus rejected the role of a magician healer who would rejuvenate men for His own self-glorification. He faced this issue in the temptation, where the challenge came, "Command that these stones be made bread."³ No magic! No use of the vast resources of spiritual and physical power that were His to titillate the fancy of men, to gain attention, to prove His uniqueness, or to gain fame and wealth among a people who were looking for signs and ready to adulate the magician.

While it is eminently clear that His healing was not the primary purpose of His ministry, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John repeatedly affirm that He healed *all manner of disease among the people*.⁴ In the ninth chapter of Matthew, through healings of various ailments, the affirmation is clear: He healed *every* sickness and *every* disease.⁵ And Mark says, "And as many as touched him were made whole."⁶ "Those which were possessed with devils . . . he healed them,"⁷ says Matthew.

How shall we answer the first question, "Did Jesus heal?" If you accept the New Testament as an authentic record, and we have dozens of reasons for so doing, the answer is, Yes, He did.

Second, Why did He heal?

The answer is that He saw healing as a part of God's redemptive work and, therefore, as an expression of His

own ministry. Jesus knew that it was part of the eternal will of God that man should be whole. He didn't heal simply because He loved people, because He was sad for them, or because He was a compassionate man. In the Gospel of John, Jesus exclaims, "I must work the works of him that sent me"⁸ It was God's will that man be whole, and His healing was an expression of that everlasting intent.

Recall the great Biblical epic: Man in the Garden of Eden is in a state of perfect health and wholeness. He lives close to the power of God. But through sin he is put out of the Garden. Now he is separated from direct contact with the power of God, which is the source of all life and wholeness. And the Bible portrays man in this great mortal world as being vulnerable to sickness, which is the work of Satan and his satanic forces that seek to destroy man.

In the New Testament, in an instance where a woman is cured of a chronic disorder, Jesus said, "Ought not this woman . . . whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond?"⁹ And on another occasion Jesus heals a blind and dumb man who is possessed of a devil.¹⁰ In this instance, after the devil is cast out and the man can both see and speak, the people, observing, exclaim in amazement. When word of this miracle of healing gets to the Pharisees, Jesus is accused of being in league with the satanic forces. But He sharply responds that Satan cannot cast out Satan. The charge was that evil spirits could only be cast out by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Jesus silences these charges as He affirms that a kingdom or a city or a house divided against itself cannot stand.¹¹ Only He can

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cast out the dark forces causing man's disorder, through the spirit of God.

But there is recognition that the illness, whatever its nature, is of satanic origin. Hence, when Jesus heals on God's behalf, He is expressing the primal providential will for man's wholeness, his rounded full health in body, mind, and spirit. To demonstrate God's intention that man have completeness, physically and spiritually, and that man grow in availing himself of the powers to overcome the fragmenting darkness that comes from Satan, Jesus *had* to heal!

Third, How did Jesus heal?

He healed in different ways, using various methods. First, it is apparent that He healed through man's faith. "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" He asks two blind men who asked for their sight. They respond, "Yea, Lord," "Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened." ¹²

Another vivid scene shows a Roman centurion, a man of dignity and authority, petitioning Jesus to heal his servant. It is a moving picture. Each man is strong in his competence. The sunlight shines on the breastplate of the disciplined soldier standing straight and sure. There is no less regality in the Nazarene, straight too, broad-shouldered, radiating spiritual force, as He stands at equal height with the Roman commander. Jesus, marveling at the man's faith, says "Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee." ¹³

These illustrations could be repeated many times from the Biblical records. *To be healed, man must believe in the healing power of faith.* It is as though the

faith men show in Jesus is the wire through which the divine electricity passes. Without the element of faith, there can be no illumination of healing.

Then there are instances in the Gospels in which forgiveness of sin was indispensable to healing.

His disciples brought a paralytic to Him, and He said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."¹⁴ It seems that only as the man's guilt was dissolved could there be a return to wholeness from his physical disorder. Could it be that the sin, with its resultant fearfulness, was a poison-producing element that resulted in physical symptoms? There seems evidence that on occasion it can be a block to robust health.

We ought to raise here an important question. Does this mean that all our diseases and sicknesses are always a result of either physical or spiritual sin? The answer is No.¹⁵ If it were God's undeviating plan that we become sick or diseased when we do something vicious, or sin in some other way, there might be the same kind of non-sensical paradox you get in "Satan casting out Satan." God would be a house divided, both curing us of ills and inflicting them on us because of our faults.

But it is equally clear that there are instances where the satanic grip of sin and guilt needs to be broken and discarded through forgiveness before wholeness can come.

As one reads the record of the Gospels it is interesting to note various methods and techniques used by Jesus that were beyond faith and forgiveness. Sometimes the patient had to do something, and at other times Jesus did something. The reasons for these various requirements we do not fully understand.

On some occasions Jesus asked the sick person to

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engage in a definite act. For example, "Go shew yourselves to the priests."¹⁶ "Stretch forth thy hand."¹⁷ "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."¹⁸

There are other instances in which He does something. He *touched* the eyes of the two blind men. He *laid* His hands on many.¹⁹ In other cases, He challenged, commanded, exorcised. With a strong will of authority, He demanded of an evil spirit, "*I charge thee*, come out of him."²⁰ He *rebuked* the fever as He stood over the mother of Simon's wife.²¹

Then there are instances when simply to touch Jesus was sufficient to bring about healing.²² Such instances suggest that He possessed and radiated powerful vibrations to assist sufferers.

In summary, it seems that faith is an elemental qualification. Conducive to the regaining of health is belief in Him and confidence in His power of healing.

Fourth, What does this mean for us now? Can we be healed today?

The repeated account of healing by Jesus tells us that God wants us whole. And this means that anyone seeking to cure man of any disease or discomfort, any fragmentation of his life, whether it be physical, mental, spiritual, is doing the will of God. Does that mean the surgeon? Yes! The nurse? Yes! The psychiatrist? Yes! The research man in the laboratory, the counselor, the social worker, the chaplain, the psychologist? Yes! It means that anyone, anywhere, at any time, who is sincerely trying to help another human being, including himself, to be free from disease and disability and to come back to health is aligning himself with God's desire.

But aren't there charlatans in these fields? Of course

there are. There were in Jesus' day; there always have been; and, in these important ministries to men's needs, there probably will be until we have the kingdom of God here on earth. Surely there are charlatans in every field of healing! Quacks and impostors and pretenders surround the offices of the reliable doctor, counselor, psychiatrist. This fact emphasizes the esteem in which these functions are held and the healing they can give.

We would be naive to think otherwise. I find myself perplexed by the individual who, for example, says, "I've given up the Church. I'll have nothing to do with religion because I knew a clergyman who was a nincompoop [or an elder who was a two-faced hypocrite]."

That emotional position is unintelligent and most inconsistent. How really foolish is the man who says, "I have no faith in the law. I will take no recourse to legal procedures because my father had an unpleasant experience with an unethical lawyer." Equally limiting is the attitude that says, "I'll close my mind to the powers of God in healing, because there is some crackpot who advertises to cure any ill with incantation or rabbits' feet if you'll send him five dollars."

Of course there are charlatans. There have been, there are, there always will be. But don't let this hinder the way of any studious and devoted attempt to heal man, to lift him to wholeness. Charlatans may try to use the techniques of Jesus, but Jesus was no charlatan.

To extend the last question, Do we know today how to heal completely in all instances through either physical or spiritual means?

The answer has to be No. The most advanced practitioners in the fields of physical and psychic medicine

will say, "We have acquired considerable knowledge and skill, but the truth is that what we want to know is greater than what we do know."

But don't forget that many of today's cures for diseases and illnesses are also miracles. You and I can demonstrate faith, which was the main force of Jesus' healing. Yes, we can experiment and prove increasingly that faith does heal. We can give and receive the spiritual healing of forgiveness.

Feel the truth of this in a case that involves you. You are sick, and your malady creates concern, fear. Gone is your robust confidence and fine mental health, and you tend to fall more and more under the control of fragmenting and negative power. You can now say, as it was said in the time of Jesus, "I am held down by a destructive satanic force that keeps me from the wholeness I so need."

But if you will, you can work on yourself a miracle similar to those accomplished by Christ. First, let the light of faith come into your mind. Pray! Reach out as Jesus did, in confident trust, toward God, the source of wholeness. And ask for the prayers of others, for "the prayer of the upright is his delight."²³ In your heart and mind say, "God, thou art life and light. Thou art healing me through the ministrations of the physician that comes to me. Through him, and through the channel of faith within my mind and soul, which I open to your desire for my health—help me be whole."

You may find the going hard at times. Strengthen then yourself by making an affirmation such as this: "The healing presence of Christ is close and real. His

words, His love, will give me such strength of mind and spirit that no bodily discomfort will conquer me."

Then you may find the channels cleared through the cleansing of forgiveness. Are there resentments, poisons of ill will, unresolved alienations in you? These may be logs blocking the stream of healing. The jam can be broken as you say, "Lord, I forgive! Lord, forgive me!"

Is there a mother who doesn't know the secret of healing through faith and love? A little child falls and bumps his head. The hurt is harsh. The cries are loud. The mother quickly and tenderly gathers the child in her arms and holding him closely whispers, "Don't cry. In just a minute the hurt will be gone. I will kiss it away." Isn't she engaged in a form of healing perhaps more powerful than the unguent that later is placed on the sore spot?

A teacher is concerned about a student. The boy looks pale. His shoulders are slumped. He is tired. He is discouraged. In the quiet of his office, the teacher's heart goes out to him as the boy tells of his frustrations and his fears over the thesis he's writing. The teacher listens with sympathy. Then he puts his arm around the lad and says, "Bill, I'm so glad to have this chance to say this to you. I've watched you in class. You have great promise. I know it's hard going just now. It has been for all of us who have been through it. But keep at it. I know you'll write a fine paper, and because of this tough time you'll have added ability to go on to what I know will be a great future."

There is healing—mental and physical and spiritual. If you still have many questions about healing and

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the place of the spirit in that process, I hope you can accept and say this: "There is one supreme fact—that Jesus Christ, the man I can hold onto without question, affirmed that God wants us to be free from sin and pain and fear. As much as I desire it, God equally desires for me to be healthy, to be whole." If you can accept that, you can truly know the experience of healing as you open your mind to His faith and your heart to His love.

It is an oft-repeated call, but it really can't be repeated too much, the one that says: "Love Jesus Christ." Let Him come close. Let the curative power of His faith surround you. Feel the healing touch of His hand. Then, even more vividly and just as truly as it occurred twenty centuries ago, He can and will help us become more whole!

"Verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not. . . ."

MATTHEW 21:21

"An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER

XX

MAN'S NEED FOR FAITH

Two thousand years ago, the body of a Greek sailor was found washed ashore after a storm on the coast of Asia Minor. Irwin Edman tells of being deeply moved when he read the epitaph placed over the body of the unknown seaman: "A shipwrecked sailor on this coast bids you set sail. Full many a gallant ship ere we were lost weathered the gale." ¹

Isn't that magnificent? A man saddened by the disaster of the shipwrecked sailor knows that the business of life must go on and bids others sail on past the place of trouble. It has been done. It will be done! Like the deft fingers of a harpist who plucks rich and unexpected chords that create an exciting tone, so the gallant quality of this statement touches a deep need that makes a singing sound within us all!

It is an appeal to our humanity to be able to stand at that shipwrecked sailor's marker and look out on what

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we know is a wide and a perilous sea, while sharing his spirit. Though knowing that some ships have been lost, we think also of others which weathered the gales. We recognize that life depends on their commerce. Knowing these things, isn't our humanity verified as we ourselves set sail?

To do that, there needs to be a quality present that man calls "faith." Faith is a many-faceted gem. Those who have analyzed its nature know that many ingredients are necessary to it: hope, confidence, daring, trust, loyalty, courage, assurance, venturesomeness.

To permit our thinking about faith to move in an ordered way, we must look at two aspects of this spiritual quality in man. One aspect of faith is indicated by the word "cognitive." It is the discovery, acceptance, and affirmation of truth. It says, "This I believe." It looks at the sea and the dead sailor and affirms, "It is necessary to sail. It is possible to have an untroubled voyage."

But there is another side of faith. Let's label it "volitional." Rather than an affirmation of belief, it is a spiritual surrender to some truth that is inwardly compelling. It says, "I trust. I must. I can do no other." To put it as simply as possible, one aspect of faith is what *we get* intellectually and then outwardly affirm. But another side of faith is what *gets us* from within and establishes the deepest trusts and hopes.

Man needs both sides of faith, and Jesus offers to fill those needs.

Look, first of all, at the volitional aspect, which is suggested by the spirit of the epitaph over the Greek sailor. It is an attitude that is unsubdued by the shipwreck on the high sea and goes on preparing the vessel of

life. True, it does so with care. But there is a sublime confidence that storm or calm on the voyage will be conquered. It sails out with unhesitating assurance that it will be a good and worthwhile voyage.

This volitional side of faith has an aspect of rashness to it, a kind of quiet boldness that is akin to the confident serenity within. That intrepid quality is felt, as Bulwer Lytton affirms, "in the lexicon of youth [where] there is no such word as fail." It is the quality that believes and knows it *can* be done. It says, "It *must* be done. It *will* be done. *We shall not falter or fail.*"

This is what Jesus is calling us to nurture and to demonstrate. For what else is it when He says, "If ye have faith, and doubt not, . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done." ²

Granted, you can walk around this saying, and others of the Master's, and argue, "Here is a use of the Oriental technique of overexaggeration in teaching to make a point particularly vivid." There may be truth to that. But don't let that obscure the exciting idea behind this exhortation.

Jesus is challenging us to the development of those volitional arteries of faith that make hopeful, daring acts. And the heart that feeds the whole spiritual circulatory system is a deep, deep trust. It is an unshakable attitude of soul and character which you see demonstrated by Christ as He teaches daringly; as He shakes old dust-dry conventions into new meaning; as He upholds womanhood and shows concern for children; as He stands before Pilate and as He hangs on the Cross.

Don't be misled—such trust takes time and effort to

develop. It didn't come easily for Jesus. There were long roots of careful nurture before that kind of trust came to fulfillment. In the long years of synagogue training, Jesus memorized, as every Jewish boy did in His generation, large sections of the Book of Proverbs. These words especially must have stayed barblike in His mind: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." ³

It is a magnificent idea, but one that must be lived with. It must be applied in experience until its riches are felt at the core of one's deepest knowledge and faith.

Jesus must have cultivated that. How else could He have had such dignity and confidence? He knew the record of Job and responded, even as you and I, to the magnificent shout of confidence in the teeth of adversity. "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" ⁴ Job wasn't talking here about what he believed, not the cognitive side, but the volitional side of faith—what, in his deepest depths, in spite of everything, he would hold to.

Thirty-three years it took Jesus to build that kind of invincible trust that echoes and refines the words of Job so that now they become, "Thy will be done." ⁵ "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." ⁶

I remember calling on an old, invalid woman years ago. There was a striking charm and radiance in her deeply lined face. Her eyes, unusually clear and quiet, bespoke an inner peace and gentleness. In a youthful and inarticulate way, I made some faltering comment about what a wonderful person she was. She responded, "Young man, it's taken me eighty-three years of reading and praying and working and weeping to learn a few things and to really know in my heart that they're so." She added,

"It's taken most of these years for me to know that God really is a loving spirit and that His hand is on all things, and that no matter what happens, everything is going to work out all right." True, it takes time to let that aspect of faith that gives dignity and calm really take hold of ourselves.

We can work at it, as did Jesus. Say regularly to your soul, "I will trust myself and my fellow men." Grow in sensitiveness to the purposes surrounding life that are grander and more enduring than any acts or ambitions that are purely individualistic or personal.

Affirm that it is so. See yourself surrounded by a host of helpers.⁷ Lift your consciousness, lift the level of your consciousness each day, saying, "I will trust in the Lord with all my heart, and this day I'll do more than just lean on my own understanding." If you let the mind go to higher levels of awareness—beyond the irritation of the commuting problem and beyond your discomfort when calling on a troublesome client—trust, one side of faith, will be growing.

The other side of faith is cognitive. It says, "This I believe." There's always a release of constructive power when any individual says to himself or to others, "This I believe."

A group of men gather to consider a problem within their business. One of them, by his indifference, indicates that he doesn't really care. Another, by his ineptitude, shows that he doesn't know the answer. But the third, who has given some preparation to the occasion, states his position and says, "*This I believe* we must do to solve our problems." Isn't it true that immediately an electric interest is generated? The energies of the as-

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sembled men are drawn to the man who has dug through to some belief.

Cultivate affirmation! There is no power in saying, "Some folks believe," or "It is generally thought to be true." But there is power in saying, "I believe!" When one comes to some issue or quest where one can say, "This I believe," there is firm ground under his feet.

Don't emphasize what you have trouble believing, what you don't believe. Doubt can be a force in achieving faith, but it is a secondary one. One grows most soundly along the cognitive side of faith by stating what one does believe. Doubt may be the survey committee that questions whether the road can be built through the hills. Belief is the bulldozer that cuts down the elevations and shows that it can be done.

The Apostles' Creed does not begin, "The Church has taught for two thousand years to believe in God." It begins, "*I believe* in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." The former is a static, impersonal statement. The latter is personal and vital. Regardless of whether you can accept all that is contained in that creed as your personal possession, do take its great framework, "I believe," and put down what is true for you.

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., during the last war, was prevailed upon, over his personal reluctance, to affirm his belief on a U.S.O. radio program. In the brief statement, he testified in part: "I believe that truth and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order. I believe in the sacredness of a promise. I believe that character—not wealth or power or position—is of supreme worth. I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty."

There is an admirable force in this statement that we all recognize. We admire it because we know the speaker has a sound orientation toward life.

Follow suit and make your own creed, "I believe." You will strengthen yourself. You will strengthen others. You will give spiritual health to your nature and to mankind!

I have always admired William James. What a delightful mind and spirit! How venturesome! He said the first lecture on psychology he ever heard was one he gave himself. Among many principles James clarified for the seeker of the useful faith-filled life was this: The physical manifestation of an emotion enhances the emotion itself.

Let us illustrate this point. Stand before a mirror and let your lips turn down and your jaw sag. Wrinkle your forehead. Say, "I'm depressed." Let your shoulders droop. Sneer a bit as you add, "This whole stinking world is a mess. There's nothing to hold onto—nothing worth anything."

What happens? Your physical pose and the negative words you speak influence your attitude and the tone of your spirit. You add to the depression, to the bleak doubts.

But now, reverse the process. Stand straight. Make your chin firm. Open your eyes wide. Say, "I believe in myself. This is going to be a successful day." Head up now. "I have confidence. I'll gain from what I'm going to do today." What happens? You are hardening the emotional muscles of courage and confidence. You are positively strengthening your own spirit and making a channel for your mental and physical energy.

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Jesus Christ helps us greatly in this discipline, particularly at that high plateau when we face ourselves with the ultimate questions of belief: What is God? What happens to me at death? Why am I here? Why do I see no discernible purpose for my existence?

Jesus of Nazareth had the audacity to face those questions and to say that He had the answers: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."⁸ He says that if you believe on Him, you see God.

What happens at death? "I am the way, the truth, the life. In my Father's house are many mansions. I will receive you unto myself. Where I am, there ye will be also."⁹

Is my life worthwhile? A sparrow doesn't fall to the ground but your Father in heaven knows. "Ye are of more value than many sparrows."¹⁰

"Believe ye that I am able to do this?"¹¹ So He is continually calling us to Himself—and the resultant belief we can get from Him alone.

So this theme of ours comes to the place where I suppose every study within the broad fold of Christianity should come. It comes to stand before the imperial figure of Jesus Christ, who confronts man with the challenge to believe on Him and to trust Him and to grow in that trust. Two thousand years of spiritual experience testify that you, as an individual, will grow in a quietness and in a dignity that you can't achieve any other way.

You say, "I believe." Well, what do you believe? Begin at any level.

"I believe in cleanliness. I believe in trying to live life in an orderly way. I believe it is important to be neat, to get a haircut now and then."

All right, put it down. Go on. Are there things that are more important?

"Yes, I believe in kindness."

Would you put down that you believe it is good to give a cheerful front, to minimize your ills? Go on, wade out into the water of life's more profound questions. What are the ultimate virtues? What about the great qualities of character?

You say, "I believe in honesty. I believe in justice. I believe in the widest possible freedom for every man. I believe in forgiveness. I believe in charity. I believe in trying to be selfless."

Excellent. Will you go on into yet deeper waters? It is above your waist and up to your chest now. Go out until the water is at your neck and your chin. What do you believe about God? What is your destiny? Who is the master of man's soul? Who and what, at the ultimate end of everything, is worthy of one's deepest trust?

If you say it—if you say, "I believe in Jesus Christ; I acknowledge Him as Lord of life and death; I accept Him as my Saviour; He is the Way, the Truth, the Life"—do you know what happens? It happens to many of us in many different ways. It will happen again and again. You will find that, though the water is about to encompass you, suddenly, underneath your feet, there is a rock. On it, you can stand above the tide, and it keeps you firm and untroubled before any waves that come your way.

May God help us grow in that profound and overpowering experience of faith.

" . . . Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

MATTHEW 19:14

"Out of our intense complexities intense simplicities emerge."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

XXI

MAN'S NEED FOR SIMPLICITY

One of the common complaints about our modern life is that it is so complicated. But isn't it true that man himself is complex wherever you find him? From what I've seen of man, I would add that he faces a complex situation no matter what part of the world may be his home! Or it may be that the complications of his being make life appear complex. So Oscar Wilde thought. "Life is not complex," he said, "we are complex. Life is simple, and the simple thing is the right thing." But does this state the matter accurately?

Consider the tribesmen living on the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan in the region of the Khyber Pass. They are known as Pathans. Hearing of them for the first time, you may say, "They must be simple, elemental folk, living a plain life." But those who know these people say that you are wrong. Living in and around the

city of Peshawar, which for twenty-five hundred years has been fought over as much as any town in the world, and inhabiting the upland rise of the land that stretches from the Euphrates to the Indus, the Pathans dwell where the violent tensions between East and West have their geographical boundaries. One of their own writers has said, "The Pathan basically is Greek, but he's crossed with something, and that something, what it is, I do not know." ¹

The Pathan was a Buddhist before he became a Muslim, and he was a Hindu before he became a Buddhist. Those who know him best will add that he is too independent to make the ideal follower of any prophet. He is, perhaps, a mixture of every race that came to India from various points of the ancient world—the Persian, the Greek, the Mongol, and the Turk.

He fought with Xerxes at Thermopylae, with Alexander the Great at the decisive battle of Arbela, and he once established a dynasty on the throne at Delhi. His temperament today, as across the centuries, is as picturesque and complicated as his history, and as the clothes he wears. He loves fighting, but hates to be a soldier. He likes music, but has contempt for the musician. He has strange principles and peculiar notions. He is hot-blooded and hotheaded, and poor and proud. "If that is what you call a Jew," said one of their poets, "then he is certainly a Jew, nose and all." ²

It was of this land and this complex people that Kipling was writing when he put down:

*Oh, East is East, and West is West,
And never the twain shall meet.*

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Complexities, they are anywhere and everywhere. But what man is happy about pressures and complexities? Doesn't every person want tension relieved, the complex made simple, the pressures relaxed? Beneath the complexity of that Pathan tribesman, and beneath the multiple facets that mark your life and mine, there is a need to resolve the complicated. How we all long for some basic things by which to live, a few simplicities that will make life worthwhile.

That is what William Morris found in the home of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. After his visit with them, he "went back to Oxford filled with the idea of Utopia and that the old world would not find rest until it accepted the dictum of Mrs. Rossetti, 'A few plain things suffice.' " ⁸

Let there be something plain, clear, simple, and all mankind will regard it as treasure. Kipling, after the opening lines of *The Ballad of East and West*, went on to affirm:

*But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Though they come from the ends of the earth!*

Strength is definite, simple, clear, and it is universally prized. Let a man who has strength of character, definiteness, and vitality of personality stand before us, and the complex curtains of any man's life will part to do him homage. So we prove our longing for simplicity. The elaborate garments we have acquired to cloak our selfhood are dropped. There is no border or breed—just man to man. And "behold, it is very good."

Sir Olaf Caroe describes the individual who could break through the complex façade of the Pathan as "a man who has in him the root of the matter; who is available, and who does not falter." ⁴

Our lives, we say, are filled with pulling responsibilities. It may be we have in our hands a dozen reins of demanding horses moving this way and that, requiring our sharp attention and full energy. The questions we face have a hundred sides. How deep is the need to get at what's basic? No matter how diverse our responsibilities, the longing to know what is really important is so intense that it is almost pathetic.

"Oh, for simplicity! Oh, for the plain, the elemental, the clear!" That cry, I'm sure, wells up in every man. "Oh, God, help me get rid of rubbish and nonessentials and lay hold—with my naked hands, without any trimmings or trappings—of that which is really essential."

How can we make some progress in the simplification of life?

Anyone with experience in living will say to himself, and would say to each of us, "Every one of us can do some honest evaluating about the uses of our time, our thought, our energies." Ask yourself, with the commitments you have this day, tomorrow, the week ahead, What is really essential? What is primary and what is secondary? What can I eliminate? Yes, make a list labeled, "What could I do without?" And make another that is labeled, "What is really needful for the health of my mind, my body, and my soul?"

In such a horse-sense analysis of the things that engage your time and thought there must be some diminishing of the strain and clutter of life. The wise gardener

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prunes the bush so that it may have a more healthful growth. A similar discipline for ourselves that cuts off the branches that drain our energy and do not bear fruit is worth considering.

Also, we may make headway toward simplification by taking stock of our inner self. It was so for Thomas Kelly, a twentieth-century mystic, whose writings are most worthy of your reading.⁵ An American of our generation, Thomas Kelly felt that the solution of the complexities that bedevil us does not always come about by modifying the external things. The reason we are pulled hither and yon is because the inner life has not been cultivated. He sees rightfully that all of us are many selves—a domestic self, a civic self, a religious self, a business self, a professional self. The trouble for many of us is that we have no “inner chairman of the board.” We do not listen to that one commanding voice, which knows what is worthwhile and could give perspective to all our responsibilities.

What is this inner voice? Kelly calls it, “A divine abyss within us all, a holy infinite center, a heart, a life who speaks in and through us to the world.” We have all heard this holy whisper at times. At times, we have followed the whisper, and amazing effectiveness of living has set in.

Kelly, who died early in his brilliant and promising career, calls others, to whom he speaks in his writings, to find this ultimate simplicity. He wants us to find it not only by reorganizing the external world, an endeavor which can be vastly helpful for some of us, but also in surrendering, as he puts it, “all else to the Holy within.”⁶

“That is mystical language and experience,” you may

say. "It is beyond my plodding run-of-the-mill life." But there is not one of us who cannot enter a bit further into this experience. Amid the outward clamor of life, we can listen more than we do to our own best thoughts. Tenderly nurture, treasure your best intuitions. We all have them. But we don't train our attention to hold onto them. We're helped to do that as we remember that it is not the outward clamor, but the still, small inner voice, "the Holy within," that can say a word to us about what is important. Here can be set up the landmarks of the great simplicities.

Jesus is suggestive to us on this score in His counsel to become childlike, as little children. You can't enter the kingdom, He says, except as a child. His exact words are: "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." ⁷

What does He mean? Can we, who are chronologically mature, go back to childhood? What is the childlike spirit? Is it to be recaptured from our own past, or is it what we see in our children or grandchildren and in the romping youngsters of the neighborhood?

In answering this question, let us first remember that there is a strong sense of identification in children; they speak of "my family," "my mother," "my dog," "my home." And is there a wail more disconsolate than that of a child who has been separated from his mother? The sobbing is not for "*a* mother"—it is for "*my* mother."

We all remember the game we played as children, hide and seek. In part it was an exciting experience, hiding in odd places or amid distant bushes. At times we felt a fear at being discovered or being in an unusual place. But there was comfort in the knowledge that

there was a home base, whether it was the old tree in the center of the yard or a pillar of the porch. What a good feeling to sprint from the distant or exotic hideaway and to touch it before you were caught. You knew where you were. You were home. You were safe.

Might not Jesus, who observed a lamb unsatisfied till it found its mother in a large flock, and who saw the wide eyes of a little boy peering at Him from the snug security of a mother's arms, have sensed the simple peace and power that was present? Relationship. Identity. "This is mine." "Here I belong."

And there is, in a childlike spirit, an unsophisticated response of wonder to all that happens. The feeling, the seeing, the tasting, the smelling, the hearing—all these faculties are alert. There is no boredom. There are endless enchantments in the wide panorama of life. Then, too, there is an unclouded love in the childlike spirit.

Among the favorite sayings of Americans, according to a survey taken some time ago, fifth on the list is: "The great essentials of happiness are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for." We must have learned a few things when these basic simplicities—something to do, something to love, something to hope for—are recognized in adulthood as basic and important.

We need help in achieving these basic simplicities that give life its good orientation. And Jesus offers to be our helper. One of the potent ways is in the offer of Himself. He suggests a personal relationship, not with a series of ideas or propositions, but with Him. Of all the religious leaders of the world, He alone makes the vitality of His teaching center in a personal relationship with Himself. "Come"—not to a way of thinking, not to a technique

of losing your soul in the oversoul. "Come"—not to an ethic first, not to a philosophy. "Come unto *me*, all ye that labour and are heavy laden."⁸ "Learn of *me*."⁹ It is a personal relationship. He is not an impersonal Saviour of the world. He is *your* Saviour and mine, *your* guide, *your* friend.

We might say that there is in Him something of the mystical enlightenment of the Buddha, and that His life and ministry sparkle with wise counsels such as come from Confucius. But the warm and compelling genius of His religion comes as you know *Him*, come to *Him*, accept *Him*. He helps man most of all in wanting him to have, with Him, that elemental and childlike sense of identification—"my Saviour," "my spiritual guide," "my friend."

And if you have lost the delight of springtime, walk with Him in His thinking and in His writing. "Consider the lilies of the field."¹⁰ "Behold, a sower went forth to sow."¹¹ Or stand with Him as you make your wide questionings before this intriguingly mysterious world, and you will see the brightness in His eyes as He says, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."¹²

His trust is unblemished. His charity is boundless. In Him, one can find the ultimate childlikeness. In Him and through Him, one achieves the final simplicities. One gains the sight that makes the complex more clear. In that personal linking of spirit to spirit, there is given, too, peace to one's heart, more health to one's body, more grace to one's soul.

"And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?"
MATTHEW 8:26

"A man who has learned not to feel fear will find the fatigue of daily life enormously diminished."

BERTRAND RUSSELL

XXII

MAN'S NEED TO MANAGE HIS FEARS

I suppose there is no one living who would not say yes when asked, "Do you feel the need to make more progress in managing your fears?" I make such a broad statement because the matter of fear is widespread and infinitely varied; its roots are never destroyed in us. We learn to camouflage and cover up many of our anxieties. As far as the world can observe, we may appear not to have them. But we still do.

Fear is as natural and necessary to our being as breathing. To attempt to tell ourselves otherwise is to play at fiction. It is to talk about straw men. The emperor Charles V read on the tombstone of a Spanish nobleman, "Here lies one who never knew fear." The emperor commented dourly and truly, "Then he never snuffed a candle with his fingers."

Indeed, no one living with a sense of responsibility can be free from fear.¹ For any sensitive and reasonable person, seeing the dangerous possibilities and portentous perplexities that face mankind in the modern world, there *should* be fear! How can anyone face responsibly the tearing urgencies of this world and not feel the desperate concern, the driving tautness, the sharp dagger of fear?

But fear is destructive in many of its forms. Excessive embarrassment, shyness, reticence, anxiety, worry, terror, fright, senseless trepidation at the unknown—these manifestations of fear need more managing than we give them.

Fear is a complex phenomenon. We differ widely in that which is fearsome to us, and what is more, the intensity of fear varies from one person to another. Not only are we more susceptible to attacks of fear when we are exhausted and fatigued, but our capacity to control our fears depends very much on the relative health of our nervous system. Thus, while one person pays little attention to thunder and lightning, another trembles like an aspen leaf.

But some fears are absolutely necessary for man's safety. Fear is a warning signal of danger. It is a trigger that, for man and beast, heightens the capacities of hearing and seeing. It steps on the adrenal accelerator for quick action.

Speaking of this opens up the topic of the racial inheritance with which we are inescapably endowed. Professor A. Mosso, the Italian researcher who specialized in the study of fear, pointed out, "We have in us the experience of all men. Within us must be the fear

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of those who perished naked in the forests striving against wild beasts and those who fed upon acorns, down to our fathers and our mothers who, in addition to their love and tenderness, transmit to us some of their anxieties.”² Such an ingrained inheritance we can no more escape than the acorn can stop becoming an oak.

Yes, we have fears. They are our inheritance, and some are essential. But let us move on to the universal questions: How can I control my useless fears? How can I relieve myself of the fatigue, confusion, ineffectiveness—and the attitudes of suspicion, malice, bitterness—that fear creates to mar my life? These are the backwash of needless anxiety.³

Jesus comes to these questions and needs with great helpfulness. There are doors opening to you in His query: “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?”⁴ I’m sure that the disciples, when Jesus spoke these words, had all the symptoms of fear—white faces, eyes dilated, voices husky with terror.

“Why are ye fearful?” One of the ways Jesus is suggesting to make some progress in overcoming our fear is to ask, “Why do I have this fear?”

Get back behind the symptom to the cause. Is it guilt? Is your alarm present because you’re afraid of being found out? Or is it that you will be discovered for being less than you’d like others to think you are? Whatever the source of your troubling anxiety, put it out openly and honestly before yourself.

You can manage that fear. Stop the acts that produce such anxiety. Make restitution if that is what you need. Say, “If this is it, I know I can be freed of this fear in confession to God and in His forgiveness.” Bow

in private. Take time. Be silent. Let your mind and spirit wing far and high. Stay, seeking and humble, until you can say, "I'm forgiven. I'm freed. This fear will bind me no more."

"Why am I always so fearful of the boss? What is it that makes me quake on meeting that particular individual? Why do I have such apprehension and stay so painfully uncertain of myself in that social group? As I ask myself honestly, do I find that I'm too self-conscious? Am I too much wrapped up in myself? Am I afraid of failing, of not making the impression I'd like to make? Silly and slight causes for such hurtful results—I'll get rid of them! Why am I afraid?"

Keep working around this pivotal question and you will find that much of your fear is unfounded. You will uncover resources that you can cultivate in place of those uncertainties. The knowledge you gain about yourself today will strengthen your self-confidence and self-reliance tomorrow. Your fear, however gigantic it first appears, will diminish and disintegrate before the question, "What is it?"

Many persons have draining fears that are prompted by thoughts of inferiority. Putting the light of clear evaluation on such dark specters can make them fade, and then the positive competences which you do possess can come to the fore. You will be able to see yourself more clearly. You will be saying, "I can take care of this. I do have ability I didn't know I possessed."

Is it a fear of darkness, of being alone, or another one of a thousand anxieties that petrify your energies? What is it? "Why am I afraid?" This is an important first step in managing your fears. It acts like a knife in cut-

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ting off the barnacles of foolish and dragging anxieties that stop the progress of one's life voyage.

Referring again to the words of Jesus, I detect in them a light touch as He responds to the terror-filled plea of His disciples.

A ship close to capsizing is portrayed in Matthew's Gospel. It is on the Sea of Galilee, over five hundred feet below sea level. There, the winds funneling down from Mount Hermon or swirling over the Syrian plateau can make for sudden storms and turbulent water. This scene is usually portrayed in a heavy, somber fashion.

But I wonder if Jesus, awakened from sleep, doesn't show almost a certain bantering quality in what He says. "Why are you so fearful, so cowardly?"⁵ It's as though Jesus is saying, "Oh, you timid ones, why are you acting so mouselike? Where's your faith?" I'm inclined to think He said that with a chiding smile, rather than a ponderous heaviness that might have added to the consternation already at high pitch.

Many a fearsome thing that agitates our emotions can be more surely managed if we use the light touch. The heavy, the dour, the somber, the ponderous seriousness can fan the flames of fear. The sprinkling water of the light touch can blanket and hold them down.

But the great counterweight to fear in my life and yours is suggested in the single word of the Master—"faith." The more faith I have, the less fear. To the degree I put faith into me—the sense of hopeful confidence—to that degree do I push back the despairing darkness of fear.

The professor of English under whom I studied in my college days is now retired and has become a painter of symbolic and abstract works. As one career closed, he

zestfully entered into another. Examining his paintings one day, I was particularly struck with one that was labeled "Fear." The concept of fear depicted on the canvas was a square tunnel, stretching from the standpoint of the viewer into the far distance.

The floor of the tunnel was smooth, worn down by millions of people who had trod the tunnel of fear. There had been so many people that there was no imprint of individual footsteps; there was no sense of personal identification. Fear had been and was a universal experience.

In the main, the tunnel was dark, filled with the blackness of despair. But curiously, at several points in the ceiling, there were a few streaks of light. "In fear, there is the ray of hope," my admired professor explained. "Most people, when they're really convulsed by fear, see only the darkness. They wander only in the despair. But one way to get through the experience is to see the rays of hope, which are a part of faith."

There was some little light at the very end of the tunnel, evidently indicating a different experience to be had once one got out of the tunnel. Was it the ending of the day that would lead to still greater darkness? Or was it the beginning of a dawn? Only one thing seemed certain: The way out of the tunnel was into the shadowy light at the end.

The point of the painting, I thought, was that we must have hope to make our way through the tunnel of fear. Without the light given by hope and faith, we are locked in unending darkness.

Rembrandt gave his imagination and skill to portraying the scene of the capsizing ship on the Sea of Galilee. Its tone is dark. Fearsome waves are falling about and

over the dimly seen ship with its frightened crew. But there is a strong light from above. It is the light from heaven, it is the light of faith. It shines on Christ. He sees it and is more concerned about it than the dark waves. The lesson is spoken: When that faith is accepted and flows through one, there is a power that brings to the storm of fear a healing calm.

"O, why are you so tremulous, so cowardly, so fearful, so mouselike? ⁶ Where is your *faith*?" We neglect our greatest weapon against fear if we neglect faith.

How do you get your faith in working condition? Say to yourself, "Though I am weak now, my fretting about this weakness does no good at all. My physical strength is waning, but I have a spiritual strength that nothing in this world can subdue. I can, I must, I will make some steps forward!" Faith grows as one affirms that attitude. One enters into more of the light. "I can do it. I know this will be overcome. The dark mountain can be climbed." Faith applied at any level, in any area of life, before any darkness, does give power to go up and overcome fear.

But finally, and most significantly, Jesus meets man's need to manage his fear by teaching that all things are in God's hands. The deepest fears are assuaged as man knows that there are ruling forces beyond his understanding and control that are controlling all events. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee." ⁷ God runs the world. The winds may roar down treacherously from Mount Hermon or over the Syrian plateau, but there will come a time of calm.

St. Augustine, centuries ago, was musing on the picture of the storm on Galilee. In a sermon he preached on

this theme, he said, "Lo! What is the cause, stouthearted man, that thy heart is disturbed? That ship in which Christ is asleep is the heart in which faith is asleep. . . . So when the tempest beats furiously . . . awake up Christ . . . Christ dwelleth in thee. . . . Arise and bestir thyself, say: 'Lord, we perish.' . . . Let thy faith awake and Christ begins to speak to thee." ⁸

And what will Christ say? It is an unshakeable knowledge that God rules this world, that He will speak to us! "Don't be afraid! Where is your faith! The faith that knows God is master of the storm."

Epictetus, the heroic slave, didn't have contact with this aspect of the Judeo-Christian tradition, but he did have the truth it emphasizes. He achieved a greatly developed soul that revealed a beautiful calm. The source of it was what we are seeking right here—a sure confidence that all is working toward some good purpose. He cried out at what must have been a time of troubling uncertainty, and yet also of profound assurance: "Whom then can I still fear? . . . I think that what God chooses is better than what I choose." Such a knowledge can give to us, as it did to Epictetus, a growing competence to walk this earth with a less fearsome heart.

Life is like the Sea of Galilee. It has its storms. There can be darkness, turbulence—yes. But there is always a light above seeking to break through. You can always be sure that there will come a time of calm. And the spiritual experience of the centuries reaffirms what the disciples found to be true on Galilee as they awoke the Christ and He spoke to them—that in nearness to Him, hope is developed—and confidence becomes more real.

"But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

MATTHEW 13:23

"I know what pleasure is, for I have done good work."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

XXIII

MAN'S NEED TO BE PRODUCTIVE

We who call ourselves Christians should never overlook the fact that Jesus calls us to work, to do good work. The New Testament portrays Him as one who is concerned with and blesses the labor of any man or woman who tries to do well what he or she has to do. This religion of Christianity is a religion of ethical and physical and spiritual productivity.¹

The roots of this position are deep in the Old Testament heritage. The great 90th Psalm concludes with these cherished words: "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." ²

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Here are two long-reaching roots from the Hebraic tradition. One emphasizes the aesthetic quality of the religious life. It is sensitive to beauty. It prompts a feeling for the mystical, ethereal, spiritual, and ephemeral side of life. It appreciates harmony, color, form. "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us."

But it is also a religion that respects work, that sees a reason for hallowing any real effort.⁸ It's a religion founded by a people who disciplined themselves in the wilderness; who conquered the Promised Land; who cleared the wilderness, tilled the fields, built their walls of defense and their great temple; and who, when the labor of the day was ended, lifted their petition and their affirmation: "Yea, the work of our hands, establish thou it."

Jesus shared this conviction and outlook. He had a quick and strong affinity for the man who did things. We almost feel his responsive admiration for the Roman centurion who said, "I say to this man . . . Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." ⁴ Jesus admired the individual who could carry out a task from beginning to end. How often He speaks of people who accomplish—the man who builds a house, the tiller of the soil, the shepherd of the flock. He continually uses a tone of respect for the man who produces, who works, for the woman who does things.⁵

When He was asked, as He frequently was, about the kingdom of heaven, He used a number of pictures or analogies. Almost every one of them conveys the idea that it is a growing, productive, and producing thing.⁶ It was to be marked by lives in which the divine seed had fallen, which would then bring forth productively,

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some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.⁷

This promise touches a deep need in man. A mark of fulfilled human life is to do a good work, to produce. This is a deep need in us all, even in those who would not acknowledge it.

We occasionally listen to the sort of young man who, lounging about, neglecting his schoolwork and home responsibilities, claims that he sees no point in work; he's going to be terribly happy in dedicating himself to doing the least that he can. He is a very confused young man. But he is more than that. He is a liar! He isn't honest with himself. If he is a normal human being, he respects, even as you and I, the individual who does a good job, who gets things done. That young man won't like himself until he, too, works and produces.

The Communist Manifesto, produced in 1848 by Marx and Engels, acknowledges the revolutionary changes that have already taken place. The *Manifesto* reads: "The bourgeoisie, by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all nations, even the barbarian, into civilization."⁸ This was the one accomplishment, as it looked at civilization in the Western world at that time, to which the *Manifesto* could give honor. There had been productivity.

The *Manifesto* goes on to affirm that there must be built a society that is emancipated from exploitation and free from class distinctions. The authors contend that it is only when the proletariat builds this classless society that the production level will be increased. This will happen, it is said, because the proletariat will be work-

ing for the enrichment of each and all, not for just the capitalists.

I cite this viewpoint to emphasize what, as I see it, is a major issue in this modern world. The issue is production—who and for what? It is a portentous issue that involves everyone. Which person, which nation, which system, can and will produce better and more books, shoes, surgery, magazines, machines, medicines, for the largest number of people? ⁹

Into this contest, the world is increasingly drawn. We in America have no Siberia where we can send the unwilling or the indifferent worker. But don't we need to say to our individual consciences, and the conscience of this free society, that any person who does not do his job is a traitor? Such an individual uses freedom as an escape from responsibility. He belies the basic principle and hope of our society, which is that the citizen, being not a serf but a freeman, will work more productively and happily than those subdued by coercion. And since the traitor fails to do the work of a freeman, he adds force to the argument that only a regimented society will work.

We used to remind ourselves that, according to Protestant teaching, each individual who has affirmed some responsibility in a Christian congregation is a priest. Everyone's task is holy. Everyone's work is sacred in the sight of God. Yours is a church that opens up, as do thousands of Protestant congregations throughout the world, a hundred avenues for your stewardship, your service, your leadership, your teaching influence, your witness with others—opportunities for your life to bear

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fruit. In America, particularly, we have established through our churches many organizations for study, worship, fellowship, and service. Now, if we who are the clergy, the officers, the leaders, the teachers, the choristers, are careless or indifferent or casual in the administration of our offices, the church suffers. The aim of a vital free church is hindered. But it's a further sober fact that when any individual is remiss in loyalty and participation in our democratic congregations, that person is pushing the church in the direction of an autocratic clergy.

However, if you teach a Sunday School class; if you invite a neighbor to join you in public worship; if you study, as we promised to do when we joined the church, "its peace, its purity, its welfare"; if you honor Jesus Christ by an affirmative life; you are then adding to the reservoirs of spiritual winsomeness and vitality. You bear fruit. You prove the potency of the Protestant idea of freedom and personal responsibility.

Let us carry on with this line of thought and perceive the challenge from Jesus to fulfill in our individual lives the moral, ethical, and spiritual potential which is ours. There has been good seed sown in your life and mine—from the Bible, from our parents, from wise teachers, from the heroes of the race. We have had some divine seeds of integrity, of honesty, of honor, of uprightness, sown in our minds and hearts. Has it fallen on stony ground, or is it responding to the challenge of Jesus that it sprout up in good soil, that it grow and produce a goodly harvest—some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty?

Sometimes I am asked why, as a minister, I do not

denounce the dishonesty that one reads about in our daily papers. Why doesn't the preacher decry more than he does chicanery among our political leaders? Why doesn't the pulpit cry out more about soft and indulgent living, the lack of character in our young people?

The answer I give, to myself and to you, is that the most effective counterbalance to the bad things we see some men do is to try to get some other men to do more good. Not flagellating the evil, but stimulating the good! Jesus pointed out that you can drive devils out of a house and sweep it clean. But those demons can come back to the empty house with additional cohorts, and the situation can be worse than ever.¹⁰ The only way that house of life keeps the evil out is by putting a good spirit in to serve as guardian and master of the place.

An improvement in business ethics is not going to come about by some preacher decrying bad business practices. It has its most productive advocate in a Christian businessman who conducts his affairs with courageous integrity.

Young people who may be disgracing themselves or misbehaving will not be brought back in line by reproaches and denunciations from their elders; the best antidote is the example of other people, their peers, who stand firm on the ground of idealism and honor.

The most powerful example and agent against the bad is an example of the good. The greatest hindrance to a wasted life in someone else is for you to make yours productive! It's for this I would preach and appeal.

The emperor Hadrian leaves a glorious legacy of his work in ennobling buildings and records of state. When he, a man of vision and work, died, Aurelius Antoninus

succeeded him as emperor. The wife of Antoninus, a woman named Faustina, didn't live strictly to her marriage vows. But she remained his wife until her death, when Antoninus made a public speech in eulogy of her. He had once said, when questioned about the conduct of his wife, "How can her follies injure me? We are what we are, and no one can harm us but ourselves. The mistakes of those near us afford an opportunity for self-control. We need not imitate their errors, but rather strive to avoid them. In this way, what might be a great humiliation has its benefits."

Can't we be sure that the wisdom and restraint of Antoninus was a power which gained a more effective treatment of womanhood in the Western world? Can't we be sure that this character shamed the worst and exalted the best in the people of ancient Rome? And isn't it true that, still to this day, anyone who lets his life be brought close to Antoninus' spirit and character is lifted with a high concept of justice and mercy?

I understand that Albert Schweitzer was once asked how effective "example" was in teaching, and he is reported to have responded, "It is *the only way*."

What is the answer to a soft, coddling, self-centered, comfort-seeking society? The example of a person who produces a life of work and direction and self-discipline—an individual who, whatever his task may be, does a good job and can say with dignity before Eternity itself, "Lord God Almighty, establish the work of my hands."

What is the answer to moral degradation and casualness? It is the example of one person who has principle and who lives by it, who produces in himself an admirable character.

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What is the answer to spiritual casualness, uncertainty, and confusion? It is one individual who lives a life of faith, who does good work in the sight of God and man.

There is one other point to emphasize on this matter of our productivity. It is to see that a man's specific work is related to God's purpose. The Christian is a citizen in heaven as well as on this earth. He believes too that God is at work in this world; and God's work is furthered through his productivity.

This means that if you are a fireman or a fisherman, a lawyer or a linguist, a merchant or a mechanic, your work is God's work. Your task is sacred. It can be hallowed with a spirit and attitude that sees it doing "the will of your Father in heaven." Brother Lawrence, living in earlier days a monastic life, had this concept as he did his duties in the kitchen. As it is our concept, we not only "make a living" through our productivity. We direct that work into the master plan of God's kingdom. We have a dignity and a fulfillment from our task that is both in and "out of this world."

What else can we say? May we be numbered among those in whom the good seed has been sown and who produce, bearing fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

"... Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." MATTHEW 13:52

"How people love an old saying! They are always quoting, 'There is nothing new under the sun,' yet there is something new every day." E. W. HOWE

XXIV

MAN'S NEED TO VALUE RIGHTLY THE OLD AND THE NEW

Jesus had been talking about the kingdom of heaven, and He said, "Do you understand what I mean?" His disciples responded yes, they did understand. Then He went on to utter these words: "Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."¹

One of the commencement addresses given in the spring of 1961 that rightfully received public attention was by Dr. Samuel Howard Miller, dean of the Harvard Divinity School. In speaking to the graduating class of Princeton Seminary, he contended that religion, to have any real place in the modern world, had to undergo a

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radical revolution. He said, "The ancient dogmas no longer dominate the imagination; the shape of life has changed; the patterns of truth are different; the questions have new terms; the doubts have deeper dimensions; the hunger of the heart and the mind has been enlarged."

Dean Miller went on to say that the only religion worth maintaining was one that would be "radical enough to engage in this world's basic troubles."

And what are the world's basic troubles? He enumerated three: (1) Freudian insights which have revealed "an abyss within man, full of new embarrassments and new fears." (2) The fears that come from the outside and are attendant on our conquest of space. (3) The interdependence of this technological world in which we live, where the human populace, of necessity, lives in close intimacy, but yet does not understand the "ABC's of human relationships." ²

That kind of thinking and speaking needs to be done. It needed to be done in the past, and will be needed in the future. Dean Miller was centering his attention primarily on religion. But his theme could be put before any individual life, any business, any profession, any vocation, any cause to which man gives his interest and effort. The need to be relevant, to be pertinent to the constantly changing patterns of life, is everlasting and universally essential.

The dean, with clarity, outlines what needs to be done. But the question is, How? Is there some key to man's troubling and perennial need—for I think it is that—to sift out the old in the light of the new and to know what should be discarded and what retained? What

pressure from the future, what voice crying to be heard, is worth recognition, and what should be held off as being unworthy of concern?

A suggestive insight, as good as any I know, comes from Jesus. To move toward that ideal social state where there is harmony and righteousness and concord—which He calls the kingdom of heaven—He suggests there must be a man who is trained, who understands the score, who knows the elemental facts of stability and of change. What is he like? He is like a householder who, as he is confronted by the new and the clamorous, brings out from his treasures things both new and old.

It may be objected that this is a generalization. Of course it is. But let us stay with it for a time. What does it say?

It says that the individual who is going to be adequate for any of the changing moments of life has to train himself in the ability to stand for a moment outside the tide of change and view it with the wisdom from the past. No matter what century of man's history you enter, you will hear youth condemning age for its stodginess or its conservatism—and age voicing its concern over the brashness, the impetuosity, the haste, of youth. To the left are the radicals, and to the right are the hidebound. This is life—the struggle, the pull, the tension, the tug of war between the two.

The wise householder accepts this as fact. He is perhaps not completely prepared, but at least he is aware that the unexpected will confront him with its fresh demands, its new questions, its deeper dimensions of doubt each day.

The person who can take unexpected and com-

pletely unforeseen demands and can meet them with competence is an individual who has tried to prepare himself for it. He is no novice to the ebb and flow of life's tides. He's been instructed by the fact that change is inevitable; that there is no such word as "standing still" in the vocabulary of life; that the unknown continually will challenge the known; that there are treasures to be kept from the past; and that, also, there are some acquisitions from yesteryear, like worn and tattered clothing, that have served their day and purpose and should be cast off.

Among the laws of New Haven, Connecticut, prior to its incorporation with the Saybrook and Hartford Colonies, were the following, now referred to as "blue laws":

No one shall cook victuals, make beds . . . or shave, on the Sabbath day.

No woman shall kiss her child on . . . fasting day. Whoever wears clothes trimmed with . . . bone lace, above two shillings a yard, shall be presented by the grand jurors, and the selectmen shall tax the offender at three hundred pounds.

No one shall read common prayer, keep Christmas . . . make mince pies, dance, play cards, or play on any instrument of music except the drum, trumpet and Jew's-harp.

No man shall court a maid in person, or by letter, without first obtaining consent of her parents; five pounds penalty for the first offense; ten pounds for the second.

We smile, and perhaps are moved to say, "Would that some of these laws might have been kept." However,

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we know that those archaic rules could not be retained. In the winnowing of time, these and thousands of others like them are discarded like chaff. The reliable scribe in Jesus' story knows that this is inevitably so. That which serves its purpose for a time but is inadequate for the demands of tomorrow, he lets go without clinging regret. He seeks to know what is relevant. He keeps his treasures. But that which is nonessential to the flow of life he lets go.

On the other hand, he may not blithely welcome all that is new without considering carefully its merit and without unjust extravagant and negative barriers against its approach. He has the flexibility that makes for open-mindedness; he realizes that God has spoken, but also that He yet speaks. We must, in wisdom and trepidation, listen for His footsteps.

Don't let anyone try to put a label on Jesus Christ! Do it and you begin to limit Him. You distort Him. You restrict your understanding of Him. I've heard Him called a social gospelite, a reformer, a revolutionist, a radical, a leftist. He isn't!

He is like the householder cherishing things both new and old. Jesus loved the old. When He went to Nazareth, the Bible says He went into the synagogue "as was His custom." The songs of the Psalmist sang in His heart. The visions of the old prophets and the nobility of the ancient heroes—these were cherished by Him. They were treasures He kept. And when He was criticized for disregarding the old legalities, it seemed He was trying to answer the question once and for all when He exclaimed, "I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfil*." *

One who grows in such infinitely deep wisdom as

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He had, one who seeks to be instructed in the kingdom of God's will and wisdom, will be like that, bringing out of his treasures things both old and new!

A man enters a well-stocked and gracious library and picks up a volume containing the wisdom of the ancient Orient. Though the book may be centuries old, he reads it by fluorescent light. On the table is an amphora urn, its soft patina glowing over the fine craftsmanship of an artist long returned to the dust. But the reader makes his notes with a ball-point pen. Things old, things new. Life must have its old; it must have its new.

The tender leaves of tea picked on the slopes of Darjeeling yield their fresh aroma only because they are connected with a mature plant with its deep-set old roots. And for that long-established plant to live, it has to put forth those new leaves. The new, the fresh, the vital, the modern interpretation or emphasis is always required, always necessary. We can't escape the old, and we can't escape the new. Each brings its treasures.

The vessel sailing the sea, the airplane cutting the skies—both use every new device for safety. But neither one would arrive at its destination without following the old principles of navigation used by sailors on ancient seas long before the Christian era. The old and the new! You don't destroy, you fulfill. Each has its place, each its demands. And each moment of tension and change has this delicate, enigmatic, persistent balance that we constantly need to grow in, and instruct ourselves in, as to which treasure is to be kept and which discarded, which of the new is to be received with gladness, which to be regarded with caution.

The scribe instructed in the kingdom knows that

God won't let us stand still. Life requires the new, but penalizes the overly rash act, the ill-timed radicalism, the iconoclastic. Life brings a new day, but that day comes in time. To live the present, yes. The wisdom of the ages is helpful, too. But the inelastic, the old wine-skin, may be completely inadequate and must be discarded. I think some must have smiled as, after trying to teach the principle of the old and the new, Jesus said, "Yes, there are some who will taste the aged vintage and will say, 'The old is better.' " ⁴ No doubt of it! But other words of God are: "Desire a better country," ⁵ "Behold, I make all things new," ⁶ "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles." ⁷

Such elasticity is opposite to that of Ella Wheeler, who is described in Walter Hard's delightful book on Vermont called *A Mountain Township*. There was a furious debate going on in town, with some folk dedicated to fighting down to the last ditch any kind of change. The immediate issue before the village was whether the hedge around the burying ground should be changed to a fence. Though there appeared to be some practical merit to the idea, it was new and different, and that was enough for some to be "agin' it." Ella was among the resisters. She stood inflexible, like her Vermont granite, against the proposed change. After her victory she said, "Course what I object to more'n anything else is havin' a newcomer like Dr. Stevens a-comin' in and tellin' us what we ought to do. Land sakes, *he ain't lived here more'n thirty years.*"

The wise householder will view not with suspicion and iron inflexibility any Dr. Stevens who may come with a sincere suggestion for a better way. Oh yes, the

new must be greeted cautiously. It will be tested against the established merits of tried truth and principle.

Opposite the attitude of Ella Wheeler is that of the jaundiced debater with the rabbi. The rabbi speaks: "Ours is a great tradition and a wonderful history." And the response comes, "But history's over!"

No, this wise man does not take that smart-alecky tone. He does not subscribe fully to the motto that all that's good has been in the past, nor does he accept the thesis that only that is good that is somewhere in the future. He knows that there can be a germinative power in sound seed, from the past harvest, that has been culled and kept. But he is unafraid to see its planting in new and fresh-turned soil.

As we face the question of how to grow in this wisdom, we are assisted again through the life of Jesus. He treasured the old, and yet was unafraid to bless and hal-low a better new.

Once He was asked how to live. He didn't come up with any new philosophy. He told His questioner to keep the old Ten Commandments.⁸ On a somewhat similar occasion He was asked what was the greatest commandment? And He said, the essence of all is "to love God and . . . thy neighbor."⁹

Ask yourself what is the bright and scintillating innovation here? Centuries of spiritual seekers have found in the response of Jesus a hub and pivot for this deepest thinking and soundest action. But is it crisp with some unforeseen point? Or is it only an old wineskin, hard and taut? It is neither. In a sense, there really is nothing other than an attuned spirit, the spirit of that trained scribe who was able for a moment to stand outside the tension

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of the immediate, who had a feeling for the best in the past, but who was also sensitive to the birth throb of the new. Only such a one could ease and bless the emergence of the Truth, could stand in the moment of *now* strengthened by the past and fearless of the morrow.

Can this help you and me in our thought and action as we face the daily kaleidoscope of change? It may not give us the specific answer in every given situation. We have to find that ourselves with struggle and with the perspective of the wise householder. But it gives us the attitude and the only sound point of view on which the right action and the best thought can be based.

"Shall I take on this new job?" "What will I do as the senior generation in my family dies off?" "Shall we move or stay put?" "What will I say to this radical proposal, this novel thought?" "This long-accepted method now seems outmoded; shall I discard it?"

You and I will be guided to the right answer in remembering the wise householder, a man who had some training, and who brought out of his treasure things both new and old. Perhaps the clearest guidance will come from Jesus himself, who must have liked that householder, for He trained himself to live by that spirit.

*" . . . except your righteousness shall exceed . . .
ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

MATTHEW 5:20

"Let each man do his best."

SHAKESPEARE

XXV

MAN'S NEED FOR EXCELLENCE

It is said so often, but let us say it once again: We live in a rapidly changing and unpredictable world. Take just the last twenty years and recall some of the things that happened during that period.

Cities of the first magnitude were leveled and have now been rebuilt. The time of long-distance travel has been reduced to a fraction of its former length. Motion pictures can now be seen on a receiving set thousands of miles from the source. Scientific instruments, crowded in metal spheres, are now circling the earth in minutes. The moon has been hit by an object from earth directed by man. Human beings have soared into space and are pushing back the frontier on cosmic transportation.

In twenty years the population of our country has increased 33.6 per cent. The world's population now stands at 2,905,000,000, whereas a score of years ago it was 2,169,873,000.¹ The average American citizen lives

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five years longer than he did twenty years ago. The United Nations receives delegates in New York whose parents ate human flesh.

Amazing contrasts! But there still hangs over the world the possibility of an atomic war and an inferno for civilization. In this world of fabulous change and growth and portent, what is it that abides? What is forever needful? Now as always, man needs and prizes that which is highly valuable.

The museums of the world, visited by hundreds of thousands of people each year, hold what? In the main, they hold the treasures of man's efforts to excel. Here it is, a saltcellar fashioned by Cellini; or there, a sketch of a human hand by Michelangelo; or over yonder, in a place of distinct honor, a marble torso from some nameless sculptor who lived at some time during the golden age of Greece. All are stamped with excellence and, hence, revered.

Go into a great library and you will see collections of rare and priceless manuscripts and books. There is a handwritten page from the pen of a poet whose song calls out the locked melody of every man's heart, a folio of a playwright whose long-familiar drama still, on reading or seeing, reveals the foibles and possibilities of every man. Everything in that carefully guarded and ventilated room is surrounded by the aura of excellence.

Is there any activity that we don't become excited about when there is the quality of excellence? The way Babe Ruth could hit a baseball; or Big Bill Tilden could serve in tennis; or Red Grange could carry a football in broken field running; or Johnny Weismuller could execute the crawl stroke; or Bobby Jones hit a golf ball!

They did what they did superbly, and any who saw them will have a thrill in the remembrance. These men excelled!

How truly Emerson put it: "If a man has good corn, or wood, or boards, or pigs to sell, or can make better chairs or knives, crucibles, or church organs, than anyone else, you will find a broad, hard-beaten road to his house, though it be in the woods."² Yes, men have sought and always will seek that which is excellent. Our appreciation for excellence is known in every avenue of human endeavor.

A wise counselor I knew years ago said to a group of young ministers that it would be a wonderful thing if each man, in the course of his career, would take a little postage-stamp-sized area of human knowledge and then learn all there was to know about it until he was a specialist, until in that one field he excelled.

This is vital advice. I've known many happy people who have shown very good results from following that wisdom. They have stayed with something, some tiny area, until they excelled in it.

There comes to mind such a woman. One of the sources of her charm and self-possession was her authoritative knowledge of ferns in a particular section of Vermont. In this she had no peers.

Another such is a man named Bill Train, who lives in the northern New York area where the woods come down to meet the meadowland. He can't spell his name but he carries himself with dignity. For in that area, Bill Train is the one individual who can locate the place where you can sink a well and always get water.

One man excelled in his study of just one issue of

one postage stamp of one nation. He wrote a treatise, it was published, and it's a collector's piece among philatelists in the world. As a stamp collector, I don't blush to admit that I honor him, as would you, for what he did was marked with excellence.

How true it is that the opportunities for the pursuit of excellence are as vast as the snowflakes that fall, the grasses that wave in the breeze, the endless tasks to which man can put his hand.

To put some standard of quality before us makes us aware that we, as human beings, are placed above the animal and vegetable kingdoms.

Jesus speaks to our need for excellence with force and clarity, "Except your righteousness exceeds . . ." or "exceeds";³ and again, "What do ye more than others?"⁴ He was nurtured on the high wisdom of His heritage, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."⁵

What Jesus was concerned about primarily was the spiritual world, the abiding, the eternal world of the mind and the spirit. He calls any and all who make any gesture toward following Him to do something, to be something special in this area.

There are many religions, and a case could be made that this one exceeds Christianity in the emphasis on aesthetics, or that one emphasizes mystical disciplines to which Christianity may have only passing relationship. But there is no religion or doctrine in the world that has had the impact on human history as the "way of life" that Jesus propounded. Just think of it for a moment. Eleven men there were, after His death, who loved Him and believed in Him and who carried on His gospel.

Those eleven committed men won the ancient Roman world and started a force that has influenced history as nothing else has.

What was said about those men and the first-century converts they won to Christ? "My, how these Christians believe!" "What faith they have!" "How they love one another!" "What courage they show! What purpose! What joy!" These were the words of reluctant admiration that came from those who saw the early Christians. They did have it—direction and faith and courage and joy. They *excelled* spiritually! Their direction, their courage, their faith, their vitality, surpassed that of the scribes and the Pharisees and the pampered Romans. They did more than others. They *were* more than others! And God was glad. The mission of Jesus seemed worthwhile. It was bearing fruit.

This is the spirit and the word of Christ that continually seeks to be heard in time—and heard at the level where we respond to what we can and should be.

Physical excellence, intellectual excellence—these things may be denied to some of us. But there is a niche where each one, everyone, can uniquely excel—and should. There is moral and spiritual excellence! There is a courage of faith, a goodness, a joy that you alone can bring to your unique place and work, to the relationships you have to other people, past and present and future. Spiritually, it is your singular opportunity, and no one else can excel like you yourself in those relationships.

It is both a sobering and an exciting fact that on a Sunday morning, in any one of thousands of Christian churches, there are more people present and at worship than there were following Calvary more than nineteen

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hundred years ago. The potential is so much greater than when Jesus died, or even when Constantine decreed Christianity as the official religion of the Roman world.

What great possibility is present to make our societies honorable, our nations morally strong, our homes citadels of affection and guidance, our businesses and professions instruments of service! Each person who "names the name of Christ" has a unique and a distinct part in it all. Each can excel. None is denied an opportunity to grow in spiritual power, to build a character that is strong and admirable.

Those who have the satisfaction that comes from excelling will be those today, as was true over nineteen hundred years ago, who hear the words and catch the spirit of Him who was continually calling man to his best potential: "except your righteousness exceed . . ." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *

"Now when Jesus was in Bethany . . . there came unto him a woman having an alabaster box. . . ."

MATTHEW 26:6-7

"We should give as we would receive, cheerfully, quickly, and without hesitation; for there is no grace in a benefit that sticks to the fingers."

SENECA

XXVI

MAN'S NEED FOR CHRIST'S APPROVAL

It has been frequently affirmed across the almost twenty centuries of Christian history that "the Bible is the greatest spiritual textbook." On it is founded the best in Western culture. Protestant statements of dogma describe it as an "infallible guide for faith and conduct." Accepting this position, I felt it would be a good thing to concentrate on one strand of the rich and varied fabric that makes up the Bible as we close our studies of Jesus. To take one incident from His biography, to walk around it, conjure with it till its full message is spoken, could be particularly fitting as the examination of Jesus and our human needs comes to its ending.

There is one lovely story that appealed to me for this purpose. It is a charming vignette in the story of the

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Master—a short, delicate, haunting incident about a woman breaking an alabaster box of precious ointment and pouring its contents on the head of our Lord.¹

The immediate background is this. The time of Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion is coming ominously close. The storm clouds of irritation among the chief priests, the Sadducees, and other dissident groups are forming into a dangerous head that is to have sad and terrible results.

Jesus has come to Jerusalem, having already told His disciples that His death is not far distant. He has been teaching in the city and on the slope to the east of Jerusalem, known as the Mount of Olives. The feast of the Passover is near,² and pilgrims from near and far are beginning to crowd the roads that lead to the Holy City. In the inner city of Jerusalem, Caiaphas, the high priest, was meeting with other priests and counselors to consider what to do with Jesus.³ They came to the unanimous conclusion that He should be eliminated. Seated in the palace, some wagged their heads and pointed out the possible danger of riot if Jesus were taken during this period of the Passover, when the city was filled with pilgrims.

This was a part of the scene when Matthew wrote, "Now when Jesus was in Bethany. . . ."

Bethany! From the center of Jerusalem, where Jesus had been teaching earlier in the day, to Bethany is about two to three miles. We today might protest at making that walk, but in Jesus' time, when traveling by foot was the primary means of travel, the distance from Jerusalem to Bethany was a very brief journey.

Bethany was a tiny hamlet in Jesus' day, as it is even

now. It is behind the Mount of Olives, where the land begins to fall away and then drops precipitously down toward Jericho to create one of the deepest inhabitable cuts in all the world. At the very bottom of that cut is the Dead Sea.

Bethany! Jesus was drawn to that village. Often He went from Jerusalem, over the crest of the hill, past the slight rise, to the hospitable cluster of homes that overlooked the austere plateau of Moab rising beyond the deep declivity where Jordan empties into the Dead Sea. There He stayed on more than one occasion in the home of intimate friends, Mary and Martha and their brother Lazarus.

But this evening, the Scripture says, He was in the house of Simon, the leper. If you visit the Jordan side of Jerusalem today, you will most likely go to Bethany. Your guide will point out two places of particular significance—one, the purported house where Mary and Martha and Lazarus lived; and the other, the house of Simon, the leper. If Simon was afflicted with leprosy and if he was alive, he would not have been in the house. No one afflicted with that dread disease was permitted contact with healthy human beings. The leper was ostracized from the community and had to live outside the city walls.

If Simon was there, he had been cured and cleansed of his leprosy. If he was not excommunicated from the village because of his active disease, it is also possible that he was dead. It could have been the case, as with homes in many a community, that a house is identified with the individual who lived there years before. You and I may say, even though the Jones family now lives

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in the place, "That's the Smith house." So it may have been with the house of Simon, the leper. We are certain there were people there that evening who wanted to provide Jesus with hospitality for the night and the refreshment of the evening meal.

Why was He at the house of Simon, the leper, rather than the house of Mary and Martha? Remember, it was a tiny community, and undoubtedly in that close-lived hamlet everyone knew what happened to everyone else. It was known that Mary and Martha had often entertained the fascinating and increasingly renowned Teacher from Nazareth. Jealousy or envy may have bared a tooth or two. Or it may have been earnest need that moved one of the neighbors to say, "He's come to your house so often. Please let Him come and honor our abode by His presence." And Mary and Martha, generous-hearted and doing as they would have wanted others to do to them, unselfishly said, "Of course. It's quite all right." And so it came to be that He was in the home that night called the house of Simon, the leper.

At the evening meal, seated cross-legged on the floor around a mat, as the native Middle Easterner does in humble surroundings, and eating perhaps out of a common bowl, a woman of the village came quietly up to Him. Matthew doesn't identify the woman.⁴ Most likely she was of the village of Bethany, and had been moved by the stories Mary and Martha told of their wonderful friend. Perhaps at some past time when the Master was there, she had sat with Mary and Martha and other villagers as He spoke about life and man and God. She had been won by those teachings that attracted man then, and ever will to the end of time.

At any rate, whatever her past knowledge of the Nazarene, she came close to Jesus as He sat at meat. She broke the seal of an alabaster box (a cruse, a flask, a tiny jar), which she carried, and poured on His head the precious ointment it contained.

An alabaster box. It could have been a vial, a jar, which you will see in museums of antiquity. Perhaps the early substance of such containers was alabaster, but later on such vials were made of earthenware. Pliny, the ancient historian, refers to the use of the alabaster containers. In Egypt you can see, in frescoes under a portico or in a tomb where it has been shaded for thousands of years from the burning sun, the picture of some ancient opening a vial and pouring the contents on the head of one he wishes to honor. Pliny also says that such vials, with the precious ointment they contained, became more valuable as they increased in age.

What an amazing thing that this woman, living in the extremely modest village of Bethany, had in her possession an old alabaster cruse. It would seem unlikely that the most well-to-do in humble Bethany would have such precious ointment. But she had it. Where did it come from? It must have been a long-held and cherished family treasure.

The contents—what were they? Probably, judging from the translation, it was the rare spikenard from India, one of the most unusual and precious of the perfumes used in Jesus' day. Mark, the earliest of the Gospel writers, indicates that its value was three hundred denarii, or the equivalent of a year's wages.

Place that picture into our modern scene. Imagine you had entertained a distinguished guest in your home.

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One of your neighbors, thought to have but modest means, came into the room and did a perfectly fabulous thing—gave some precious gift. Or if, in our day, we practiced anointing with oil, that neighbor unexpectedly emptied a flask whose value would have been equal to, let's say, five thousand dollars. An amazing thing!

Why was there the anointing? It was a common practice in Jesus' day. For centuries, oil was applied on the head in various countries with hot climates. One theory is that the practice began as a practical matter to help preserve the scalp and hair from the intense burning of that Middle Eastern sun. But it became, over centuries of use, a gesture of homage and hospitality.⁵ The gracious host would anoint his guests on their arrival into his home. The quality and value of the ointment or the oil showed the degree of his prosperity and also the degree of esteem for the guests.

There are some interpreters who feel that the woman, coming as she did in secrecy to the quiet of Simon's house, had a yet further special purpose and interest in her anointing.⁶ She was anointing Jesus in the fashion that had been reserved for the ancient kings of Israel, to set them apart because of their royal office. She was trying to make Him show His hand. He was to be, and this was to prove it, the anointed one, who, at that very time when Jerusalem was being filled with pilgrims, would lead the long-hoped-for rebellion to throw off the shackles of Rome. There are a number of interpreters who read this into the story.

But, it seems to me, there is no warrant for such a conclusion. That attitude appears unjustified when one considers the common practice of using oils and sweet-

smelling unguents on the head, and, secondly, when one listens to the disciples' response to the woman's unexpected act. Their reaction is quick and critical: "To what purpose is this waste?" Then, catching himself, someone added, as an afterthought, "For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor." Judas was in on the conversation, no doubt. As treasurer of the band, he was likely calculating, "We could have gotten four or five thousand dollars—maybe even ten, depending on the age of the precious ointment. And, yes, we could have given the money to the poor." ⁷

Had the woman been symbolically anointing Jesus as the Messianic King, and had the disciples been aware of her intention (at least one of them has been identified with the group of zealots that were interested in throwing off the authority of Rome), it certainly would have been indicated by her in some way or by the response of the disciples. But their chiding indicated no such feeling. It was cutting and thoughtless, and then they threw in the idea of waste. Jesus quickly responded, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me." Not "she has done a beautiful thing—isn't it lovely what she has done? What a nice person!" No! "She hath wrought a *good work upon me*." However others might interpret the act, He wanted all to know that He saw it as a deeply personal thing and He was touched by it.

What was the beautiful thing? What was the good work?

She had done something with complete spontaneity. It was a boundless kind of generosity. It was an uncalculating outpouring of devotion and love.

Was it a foolish thing to have done? The disciples

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were yapping like little puppy dogs that it was terribly foolish. But Jesus' prompt response blocked their criticism. He wouldn't have the woman embarrassed. If in His mind He raised the question as to whether her act was foolhardy, we know nothing of it. He was quick to save her from the hurt that was being inflicted. "Why trouble ye the woman? She hath wrought a good work upon me." The disciples were stilled, the villagers were silent, and the woman's heart sang!

Jesus' spontaneous show of generosity and love was the greatest thing—not primarily for Himself, but for her. His prompt stopping of the disapproving comments, and so protecting her feelings, shows how full was His knowledge of the human heart. Tender gestures need protection. He immediately put Himself in the role of the benefactor. Any comment toward the woman would be directed at Himself.

But He wouldn't stay in this personal realm long. One clear statement was enough. There was possibility of embarrassment to the woman, and He certainly wasn't going to deal analytically or introspectively with a touchingly spontaneous and full-hearted gesture.

So He moves quickly on to the point the apostles raised—the idea of waste. Why not give to the poor what's been flung away here so foolishly? This was the question. He faced it, responding, "Ye have the poor always with you."

Now we are not to take those words as approval for indifference or casualness toward human poverty and hunger and pain and cold. A dozen times in the Bible, Jesus calls men to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, help those who suffer in body and mind and soul.⁸ He

makes such help a personal relationship to Himself: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." ⁹

How wrong it would be to take His words to mean that because we always have the poor with us, we should be spendthrifts and give up any idea of alleviating human poverty. "God must have loved them so, He made so many. There is nothing we can do about them. Our efforts are only a drop in the bucket." Not at all! That is not a proper deduction from Christ's words.

I think there is a connection between His thought here and what He says, seemingly unconnected, in the next breath, which is, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Wheresoever this gospel be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Couldn't there be a connection between "ye have the poor always with you" and "she hath wrought a good work upon me, . . . she did it for my burial"? Here again was traditional custom—to anoint the corpse before burial with the finest unguents.

Jesus, in His wisdom, understood that of course the poor need bread. The cruse might have been sold and provided a bit of bread for the many. But something, also needful, is given to the poorest in this gracious picture of the costly anointing of His body for burial.

What the woman did, in lovingly anointing Christ, and His response, knowing what was to come, "she did it for my burial," has fed millions of souls, rich and poor. Doesn't this little story nourish one of the deep hungers of the human heart that bread, and bread alone, can

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never fill? Aren't the light-filled moments of life those that are bright with any unexpected generosity and clothed in the beautiful robe of selflessness?

It is true that the unguent she poured blessed the Master in that brief moment, but there was also an anointing of Him for death and eternity. His body was being hallowed in a gracious tradition that could not be carried out at the time of crucifixion. His body was honored—a body that soon was to be so cruelly brutalized by the crown of thorns, by the spittle of an angry mob, by the driven nails, and the spear thrust in the side.

Could it possibly have been that Jesus, walking to Golgotha, held His head straighter and was better able to meet the pain of the Cross in remembering the woman who put precious oil on His person that now seemed so despised by those about Him?

He was right. Wherever the gospel will be told, so also will be told the story of the woman who broke the seal of a precious alabaster box and, in a strangely startling act of loving admiration, anointed Jesus as He sat in the house of a man called Simon, the leper, in the tiny village of Bethany.

Now shall we take one facet of this story and dwell on it? For one, the story can be a reminder that each man has an alabaster box. You have something precious—affection, faithful loyalty, selfless loving—which, in the giving to another, leaves a fragrance that blesses and hallows. What is the rare unguent you have? Who is the individual who needs it from you? Is it used? Are you guarding it too closely? Have you forgotten you have it? This could speak to someone today.

For another, there may be a word about guarding

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one's tongue against severe criticism. This word says, "Avoid in human relationships the unthinking, sharp response of the disciples who ranted about the foolishness of the woman of Bethany." Ask what tendencies in you, as with the disciples, prompt this sharpness? Is it a result of envy, of shallowness, of not really coming close enough to God to be gentle about the foibles of mankind and glad in the goodness there is in every man? Does it show up a lack of breadth or patience when you act like the disciples did then?

For someone else, is there a lesson to learn here, from the way Jesus acted, not by what He said, in how to receive the alabaster box of someone's faith and selfless friendship which has been poured over you? Have you held it in esteem and let the giver know it was cherished? Have you expressed appreciation graciously, and lovingly protected the spirit of noble giving? Have you revealed a grateful spirit that made the giver, as was the case with the woman who anointed Jesus, the richer for the giving?

For yet someone else, there may be a word along this line: Never forget that your act has consequences; that what you are, and do, really does live on and on to the end of time. Is what you are doing, as with this little story, a fragrance to be treasured? Or, to continue the analogy in a blunt way, is there a smell that makes men want to turn away?

For each of us there certainly is a simple call to keep in memory the recollection of the scene at Bethany. Like the nameless woman who kept an alabaster box, our hearts can be enlarged as we at times bring out our treasure of selflessness, open the seal, and put its fragrance on the evening air. And remember this—when—

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ever you show your love to Christ, your adoration, you are adding to that beautiful memorial begun by the nameless woman of Bethany long ago. More than this, you have His approval.

Through this book I hope you will have found many a word of Jesus speaking to your particular wanting and need. He so wants to speak to you and be helpful. If you listen you'll hear His word to you. And if you earnestly seek His help you shall find it, for He came to minister to your human need.

NOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Matt. 4:19. So many aspects of this call cannot be considered here. Note that these were "working men," men of the people. Wycliffe translated the phrase "come ye after me" (cf. Luke 9:23; 14:27). Tyndale made it "follow me." They were to go with him, as pupils were accustomed to travel with their Greek philosopher-teacher, or as Elisha "followed" Elijah (I Kings 19:20 f.) for years before he succeeded him.

2. Luke 19:1-10. Matthew mentions Jesus being in Jericho (Matt. 20:29) and "going up to Jerusalem" (Matt. 20:17), but the incident of Zacchaeus is not included in the Matthew record.

3. Matt. 19:16 ff. The man is here described as "young" (Matt. 19:22). In Luke's version he is not noted as being young, rather as "a certain ruler" (Luke 18:18 ff.). It's interesting to note several slight, but important variations in the two accounts. In Matthew the questioner asks, "What good thing shall I do?" In Luke it is simply "What shall I do?" In Matthew the answer is: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell. . . ." In Luke (as in Matthew also), after having assurance that the man has kept the commandments, Jesus says, "Yet lackest

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thou one thing. . . ." Note Matt. 16:19-21, Jesus' basic teaching about laying up treasures in heaven (spiritual) as over against treasures on earth.

4. Matt. 7:7. Additional passages that enlarge on this vibrant confidence of Jesus are: Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 14:13; James 1:5, 6; I John 3:22.

5. The doctrine of the worth of the individual is enunciated by Christ in many ways. In His attitude toward children (Mark 9:36; 10:15); in the Sermon on the Mount where He speaks of God's providential oversight of all creation, "Ye are of more value . . ." (Matt. 10:31 and Luke 12:7); in His assurance that in tribulation God will never forsake His followers (Luke 21:18); in the parable of the Lost Sheep; and through many other, both direct and indirect, teachings.

6. Matt. 25:31 ff. presents a typical picture of the judgment when all nations shall be gathered and then separated, "as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Soul-growth, productivity in service, are the criteria that determine whether one stands on the right hand or the left.

7. This is a personal definition.

8. The italics are mine. The letter came, written in pencil, on a small, ruled tablet page, from a man in prison on the West Coast.

9. United Nations agencies have compiled statistical material on the world's population increase. I have been deeply impressed by this problem, particularly in India, where I observed in two months' intensive travel the wrenching problems of a people that have: more than double the population of the U.S. on a land area less than half the size of ours, an average income one-fiftieth of ours, and at present rates of population increase another one hundred million souls in ten years.

10. Matt. 25:40. This is reminiscent of Prov. 14:31 and 19:17 where a ministry to the poor is equated with service to God. Schooled as He was in the Old Testament, there is great likelihood that these passages reflected for Jesus the persuasive compassion of the Father in heaven known to the ancient Hebrew. But the idea needed vitality, which Jesus gave it.

11. We must not have blinders on when we earnestly seek spiritual truth. What little study I have been able to make of the mysticism of Far Eastern religions has enriched my appreciation of the Bible. The affinities, at the level where we ask about the nature of man and God, and the spiritual laws that lead to soul-growth, are many. All may not have found Christ, but the search is wide and has been a long one for those treasures "that rust cannot consume."

12. Eccles. 12:6, 7. This is my own translation made from a study of the Hebrew passage.

13. The words here are taken from the parable of the talents, Matt. 25:14 ff. Many are the references concerning the "joy" that shall come to the faithful disciples who have lived the spiritual life and sought spiritual treasure. Examples are Acts 2:28; Heb. 12:2; I Peter 1:8, 9.

14. The call to "follow" was given not alone to the twelve. Note Matt. 19:21. It was a constant closeness to Christ—not just listening to His public addresses, but chatting with Him in every experience—this was the disciples' call. It was living with Him, learning to look at the world, at man and God, through His eyes. So the disciple came not alone to know the teaching, but the source—in the Teacher himself.

15. John 14:6. Cf. Matt. 11:27; Rom. 5:2; Heb. 9:8 for further reflections of the early Christians that Jesus was the way—the only way.

CHAPTER II

1. Matt. 11:28.

2. A major part of Matt. 6, from the Sermon on the Mount, is devoted to the theme of freedom from anxiety. Jesus presents the argument that God has given life, and that He will surely give the substance for life such as food and raiment. A further argument, which might be termed "from the lesser to the greater," points out how God feeds the fowl of the air—"Are ye not of much more value than they?" The whole section, end-

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ing with verse 34, presents a strong series of points for a deepening trust in God that eliminates all anxiety. The Greek word which is translated "thought" or "care" or "anxiety," as it is seen in other Biblical passages (II Cor. 11:28; I Peter 5:7, etc.), has both a positive and a negative connotation. An "intense concern" rightly placed is worthy. But when it is misdirected and springs from lack of trust, it is "an acid unto the soul."

3. Matt. 11:29. Jesus appeals to us both directly and indirectly to come into the "learning of His ways." I Peter 2:21 shows that the early Christians realized this ". . . leaving us an example, *that ye should follow his steps.*" Paul says (Phil. 2:5), "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

4. John 6:12 recounts the miracle of feeding the multitude. "Gather up the fragments . . . that nothing be lost." This command illustrates the sharp observation, the keen savoring of each moment, the complete concentration and the retentive memory that characterized Jesus.

5. Luke 19:1 ff.

6. Mark 5:25 f. In the Matthew account (Matt. 9:20 ff.) the woman did not even physically touch his garment, but simply expressed the thought and longing "within herself." But, possessing the rarest sensitivity and empathy, Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole."

7. The idea of both a physical and spiritual evolution also plays a large role in the mystical concepts of life's origin and nature and destiny in Hinduism.

8. Matt. 10:14. Cf. Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5. The unpleasant or unsuccessful enterprise was to be forgotten promptly. The dusty memory of it was to be shaken off quickly.

9. True, we can learn from our failures. But we can learn more from our success. I am sure Jesus reasoned this way.

10. Cf. Note 3 this chapter, and read carefully Matt. 6:19-34.

11. Too much emphasis has been put on Jesus as a revolutionary, physically overturning the money-changers' tables. This incident is solitary. A man, He was, of indomitable courage. But He was never rash. He sought for harmony between man

and man, and man and God. A much more accurate theme of His life is "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

CHAPTER III

1. Matt. 5:21-26. This is one of a series of teachings which take an Old Testament maxim and elaborate on the spirit behind it.

2. Matt. 5:22. In rabbinic thought there was a recognition that anger and murder are cause and result. Jesus sought to eliminate from man's character those elements that made him antagonistic, cruel, murderous.

3. *Raca* and the Greek word *moros*, "fool," are hard to differentiate with our limited knowledge of the original meaning. There is a Hebrew word *moreh*, which may be akin to the Greek. It has been translated "subordinate" or "stubborn." There is no doubt that Jesus was using three "descending" stages in the words used in Matt. 5:22.

4. It was widely believed by Jews of the first century that the hell, or Gehenna, of fire was a place where sinners were tormented prior to the final judgment. Others believed this was the sad terminus after the judgment was pronounced and man was found wanting.

5. The parallel passage in Luke 12:57-59 is in a context dealing with the end of the age, where the thought is: "If you were on your way to the trial, you would try to settle the case out of court. Likewise, the time to get right with God is now" (*The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7 [New York, Abingdon Press, 1951], p. 297). Matthew's account, I find, has a cogent power: Tomorrow can be too late for reconciliation. Don't dawdle with the alienation. Resolve it now.

6. In his *Pensées*, VIII, written in 1670, Blaise Pascal counseled: "When we wish to reprove with profit, and show another that he is mistaken, we must observe on what side he looks at the thing, for it is usually true on that side, and to

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admit to him that truth, but to discover to him the side whereon it is false. He is pleased with this, for he perceives that he was not mistaken, and that he only failed to look on all sides." Many a deep chasm between religious groups, and many a fruitless war could have been avoided through the following of this more thoughtful and amenable approach.

CHAPTER IV

1. James 5:1-3. There is "treasuring up of wrath,"—a retribution—for those who have merely developed the material side of life, who have been covetous about this world's goods, and neglected the treasures of goodness and generous service to their fellows. Cf. Rom. 2:4, 5. See also evidences of the Old Testament foundation of the ideas of economic justice: Lev. 19:13; Job 24:10; Jer. 22:13; Mal. 3:5.

2. Luke 1:53.

3. Matt. 19:24. This can be considered one of the deliberately formulated "hard sayings" of Jesus. No attempt to soften its force will stand up. Even seeing the passage as an "exaggerated" statement, so made to give it added force and retentive power (a frequently used vehicle by the Oriental teacher), cannot dilute Jesus' grave fear of the dangers of wealth and power. Cf. Matt. 6:19-21, 24; Luke 12:13-21.

4. Matt. 6:32. God's providential concern and care for man is continuous. He is the Shepherd Creator and He cares for the wants of His creatures (Ps. 23:1). Paul beautifully expresses the Old Testament confidence and the spirit of Christ as well in Phil. 4:19, "My God shall supply all your need. . . ."

5. Luke 12:20. Cf. Ps. 39:6; Jer. 17:11.

CHAPTER V

1. I Sam. 1-3. These chapters tell the touching story of Hannah, the mother who "loaned" her son Samuel to the Lord;

of his trusting service in Eli's house; of the evil of Eli's sons; of the devoted affection between the aging priest Eli and the child Samuel, whom he called "my son" (I Sam. 3:16).

2. I Sam. 18:1. ". . . the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." The classic story is carried on through I Samuel to II Samuel 1, where, in my judgment, we read as exalted and poetic a tribute to a great friendship as is to be found in any literature.

3. Ruth 1:16.

4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Friendship." Not only is this essay worthy of rereading, but in other writings he comes back to this topic. In "Circles," written in 1841, he said, "A man's growth is seen in the successive choirs of his friends." In a letter to Thomas Carlyle on September 17, 1836, he said, "We want but two or three friends, but these we cannot do without, and they serve us in every thought we think."

5. John 15:14. The verse preceding is pivotal, too, as showing His own thinking and a basis for His life: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

6. Matt. 28:20. His friendship is predicated on observing His commandments. Cf. Acts 2:42. To the first-century Christian, this "Great Promise" meant that Christ could be counted on even to the end of all human history. Through the days of the ultimate catastrophe, He would be adequate—still Friend and Lord.

7. Jesus seems to have avoided the ascetic type of ministry and life characteristic of John the Baptist and other holy men and teachers.

8. Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 6:42.

9. Matt. 19:24.

10. Matt. 9:13. Cf. also Luke 9:56. The counterpart of these passages in John affirms that God sent His Son not to condemn the world, "but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17).

11. Jesus was seen by John as the one who "taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). In His personal relationships with people, Jesus clearly and constantly repeated that an

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elimination of sinfulness in their lives was necessary for release from their ills and fears. It was the required element, too, for continued association with the purity of His friendship. The impotent man (John 5:7 ff.); the woman taken in adultery (John 8:3 ff.) were each counseled to "sin no more." There had to be a commitment to keep the old state from returning. Cf. Matt. 13:45.

CHAPTER VI

1. *Hastings' Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951) contains this summary and offers an initial comprehensive survey of demonology in various cultures and religions.

2. Examples of the wide variety of such instances are the following: Matt. 12:26; 16:23; Acts 26:18; Rom. 16:20; II Cor. 2:11; 12:7; I Tim. 5:15. These are representative passages on Satan. References to devils, demons, unclean spirits, which Christ and His apostles cast out and so restored health and sanity to the afflicted, are the following: Matt. 4:1, 5, 11, 24; 8:31; 9:32; 11:18; 12:22, 24, 28; 13:39; 25; 41; Mark 7:29; 16:17; Luke 4:33, 41; 9:1, 42; 11:20; John 7:20; 8:48; 10:20; 13:2; Acts 13:10; I Cor. 10:20; Eph. 11 ff. Illustrative references to evil are the following: Matt. 5:45; 6:34; 7:11; 7:18; 9:4; Luke 6:22, 45; John 3:20; Rom. 7:19; 12:9, 21; I Cor. 13:5. Evil is used to describe that which is corrupt, that which involves trouble or affliction, and that which is wicked and wrong because it is opposed to God and His will. Evil is the result, or fruit, of Satan and his minions.

3. Matt. 4:10.

4. Matt. 17:18.

5. Mark 8:33; Matt. 16:23; Luke 4:8.

6. James 4:7.

7. I Peter 5:8.

8. John 8:44.

9. The Israeli museum is located on a hill associated with

David and the long sweep of prophets and sages down to Christ that make up the Biblical epic. It is particularly telling to view these evidences of the modern power of satanic forces on land, where repeated warnings against him have been made.

10. Cotton Mather, "A Discourse on the Wonders of the Invisible World" Sermon, Aug. 4, 1692.

11. Matt. 17:21. The original reading of Mark 9:29 was: "And he said to them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." The early Christians believed that the practice of fasting brought many spiritual benefits.

12. Paul, in Rom. 12:9, puts it strongly: "Abhor that which is evil." Cf. also other instances in which rebuking is encouraged, as Luke 17:3.

13. Deut. 6:4.

14. I Thess. 5:22; I Cor. 15:33; and especially Rom. 12:21. In *On Life*, 1887, Leo N. Tolstoy, in commenting on the passage "resist not evil," sees it as meaning "never commit an act that is contrary to love." This is, in personal character, the perfect armor against the forces of evil.

15. Rom. 8:38-39.

CHAPTER VII

1. Matt. 4:3. Cf. Deut. 8:3.

2. Matt. 4:6. Cf. Ps. 91:11.

3. Cf. Deut. 6:16. Note instances of Jesus' refusal to perform signs, Matt. 12:38-42; Luke 16:19-31. On the victory of Jesus over all temptations see Heb. 4:15.

4. Cf. *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII (New York, Abingdon Press, 1951), p. 272.

5. "The epochal strife was within him." See *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. VII, pp. 269 ff.

6. I remember a lecture given by Dr. R. Worth Frank on "The Words of God." What were they? Among others, they were: Truth, Beauty, Order, Goodness, Love. The Israelites' "manna" in the wilderness is mentioned in Exod. 16.

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7. Cf. Exod. 17:2; Deut. 6:16; Luke 4:12; Acts 15:10; James 1:13.
8. Matt. 4:10. Cf. Deut. 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; Josh. 22:5; 24:14; I Sam. 7:3; I Chron. 28:9.
9. Cf. Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52. Mark says he also took in with him the father and mother of the little girl.
10. Mark 5:41.
11. Matt. 4:10.
12. Matt. 26:42. Cf. Matt. 6:10; 7:21; 18:14; John 4:34.

CHAPTER VIII

1. Matt. 5:48. Cf. Matt. 19:21. See also Gen. 17:1; Lev. 19:2; Col. 1:28; James 1:4; I Peter 1:15; Eph. 5:1.
2. John 14:6.
3. Matt. 24:13.
4. *The Mahabharata*; the *Bhagavad gita*, II, 77. For a fine summary of Hindu teachings see Ruth Cranston, *World Faith* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1949), Chap. I.
5. *Medico*. Vol. II, No. 1 (February, 1961), p. 4.
6. In most collections of "extra-Biblical sayings." For the reader interested in these sayings, I would recommend *The Gospel of Thomas*.
7. Hallowell, John H. *Main Currents in Modern Political Thought* (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1950), pp. 618-19.
8. *Aramco World*. Vol. 12, No. 3 (March, 1961), p. 11.

CHAPTER IX

1. Matt. 6:12. It is translated "debts" in the King James version, "trespasses" in the Book of Common Prayer.
2. Matt. 6:14-15. Cf. Matt. 18:35; James 2:13. See also Mark 11:25; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13.

3. Matt. 18:23-35.
4. The margin of the Revised Standard version says "about a thousand dollars." The sum appears greater as it is observed that the purchasing power in Jesus' day was much greater than in ours. The "servants" or "slaves" of the king were great noblemen or satraps.
5. Cf. Amos 2:6; 8:6; Neh. 5:4-5.
6. These words are an attempt to get the "flavor" of the words, rather than a literal translation.
7. We can be relatively sure that the forgiveness of the debt must have been founded on a fuller explanation than is given in Matt. 18:26.
8. Matt. 18:21-22. Cf. Luke 17:3-4; Col. 3:13.
9. Our parable of the king and servant is illustrative. See also James 5:16; I John 1:9.
10. Matt. 18:15-17. Cf. Lev. 19:17; Luke 17:3. See, on the matter of witnesses, Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; I Kings 21:13; John 8:17; II Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28; I John 5:7-10; Rev. 11:3.
11. Cf. the Book of Common Prayer; the Book of Common Worship of the United Presbyterian Church; the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in the United States, and many others.
12. I John 1:9.
13. Matt. 12:31.
14. Matt. 7:1. The Biblical counsels to refrain from judgment are many: Rom. 14:10, 13; John 9:39; II Cor. 5:10; I Peter 4:17.
15. Isa. 1:18. Cf. Ps. 51:7; Micah 7:18; Rev. 7:14.

CHAPTER X

1. L. A. G. Strong, "Three Epitaphs," *The London Statesman*.
2. Prov. 11:1.
3. Leland E. Hinsie, M.D. *Understandable Psychiatry* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1951), p. 294.
4. Matt. 22:15-22. Cf. Mark 12:13 and Luke 20:20.

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5. Matt. 22:18 indicates that Jesus saw through their chicanery. He "perceived their wickedness."

6. Something of the guarded counsel of Eccles. 7:16 to "be not righteous over much," accepted by Jesus, made him wary of fanatics. Matt. 8:19 is an instance. See also John 16:2, where there is a recognition of the trouble and tragedy that may come from misguided zeal. Paul, in Gal. 1:13-14, admits his personal fault in this direction. See also Rom. 10:2-3; Gal. 4:17; Phil. 1:15-18. It is interesting to observe that rabble rousers completely misquoted Jesus later, saying that He opposed giving tribute money to Caesar. See Luke 23:2.

7. There is little question that Jesus, in the totality of His teaching, asks men to give first and final allegiance to God. The Pharisees, too, made "no compromise when Caesar infringed the sphere which appertained to God." (Israel Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 1st series [New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917], p. 64.) God is sovereign. His spirit and truth are to rule in all of life. So Jesus teaches. But in the instance we are considering here, He simply says to give Caesar his due, and God His.

8. See *Analects of Confucius* (New York, Modern Library). Cf. Ruth Cranston, *World Faith* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1949), p. 61 ff.

9. Many are the passages where Jesus calls men to give and forgive; to respond and act with alacrity and good spirit. Cf. Matt. 5:42; 25:34. The very fact that Jesus replied immediately, without long hesitation and delay, to the question of tribute money, is illustrative of this quality in Him.

10. Cf. Eccles. 9:10.

11. See Deut. 10:12; Micah 6:8; Matt. 22:37-39.

CHAPTER XI

1. James Gordon Gilkey, "Goings Out and Comings In," in G. Paul Butler, ed., *Best Sermons, 1951-1952 Edition* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1952), pp. 141-142.

2. George Bernard Shaw, "Maxims for Revolutionists" (1903).
3. Cf. Matt. 5:45; 10:31; Luke 12:7.
4. Matt. 19:14. Cf. I Peter 2:1, 2.
5. Tryon Edwards, ed., *The New Dictionary of Thoughts*, rev. ed. (New York, Doubleday & Co., 1955), p. 100.
6. Luke 23:34.
7. Cf. John 3:17; Luke 6:37.
8. Cf. Matt. 26:6-13; Mark 14:3; John 12:3.
9. Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34.
10. Cf. Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:21.
11. Mark 10:17 f.; Luke 18:18 f. See also Luke 10:25 ff.
12. Luke 10:30 f.
13. Luke 15:11-32.
14. Cf. John 14:1-3.
15. Thomas R. Kelly, "The Reality of the Spiritual World," in Herrymon Maurer, ed., *The Pendle Hill Reader* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1950), p. 38.
16. Israel Zangwill, "The Redeeming Mercy," from *Jehovah*.

CHAPTER XII

1. *The Gospel According to Thomas*. Coptic text established and translated by Henri-Charles Puech and others (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1959), pp. 49-50.
2. Luke 22:19. Matt. 26:17-30 contains a full account of the Last Supper.
3. Matt. 26:19. ". . . they made ready the passover."
4. Luke 10:30 f. Cf. John 4:9, ". . . the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."
5. John 8:3-11.
6. Matt. 26:25.
7. Matt. 5:48. Cf. Gen. 17:1; Lev. 19:2; Col. 1:28; James 1:4; I Peter 1:15, and Eph. 5:1.
8. Matt. 2:13-15.

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9. Luke 2:45-47.
10. Matt. 27:46. Cf. Mark 15:34 and Ps. 22:1.
11. Mark 14:36. Cf. Matt. 26:39; Luke 22:42; John 12:27; 18:11.
12. Cf. Matt. 26:39b; II Sam. 15:26; Rom. 15:2; Phil. 2:8.
13. Luke 9:51.

CHAPTER XIII

1. Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-34.
2. Rom. 8:38-39.
3. Charles Guignebert, *Jesus*, trans. by S. H. Hooke (New York, University Books, 1956), p. 535.
4. Cf. D. F. Barth, *Die Hauptprobleme des Lebens Jesu* (Gutersloh, 1911), p. 235; J. Wellhausen, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien* (Berlin, 1911), p. 149 ff.; cf. also James G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. II (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1955), p. 197.
5. Leslie D. Weatherhead, Sermon, in Alton M. Motter, ed., *Great Preaching Today* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1955), p. 244.
6. *Life* magazine (March 31, 1961), p. 30.
7. William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act I.
8. Cited in *Life* magazine (March 31, 1961), p. 30.
9. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1943).

CHAPTER XIV

1. Isa. 42:1.
2. Luke 18:10 ff.
3. From essay on Johannes Brahms, by Elbert Hubbard. *Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great*, Vol. XIV (Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1928), p. 344.

4. Cf. Rom. 8:28. See Exod. 3:4; I Sam. 3:4; 6:8. See also references regarding "the children of God," such as Hosea 1:10; Rom. 8:16. The position of such is not based on natural creation or human merit, but by God's redemptive action and covenant grace, which call men to faith (Gal. 3:26) and to a life of goodness and love (Matt. 5:9, 45; Eph. 5:1; I John 3:10). See *Westminster Study Edition of the Holy Bible* (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1948).

5. On the "chosen people" see: Ps. 33:12; Matt. 20:16; John 15:16, 19; Acts 9:15; 10:41; Rom. 16:13; I Peter 2:4, 9.

6. Cf. verses cited in footnote 4.

7. Eccles. 3:1 ff.

8. Micah 6:8; Deut. 10:12.

9. Matt. 11:28. Note the "all." There are no restrictions on Christ's gracious call.

10. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. I (Presbyterian Board of Christian Education), XVIII, II.

11. *Ibid.* Vol. II, III, IX-X.

12. I Peter 1:2.

13. Col. 3:12-14.

14. Matt. 24:24.

CHAPTER XV

1. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Matt. 25:1-13.

2. II Cor. 9:6. See also Ps. 126:5; Hosea 8:7; 10:12; Micah 6:15; Matt. 25:26 and Luke 19:22; John 4:38.

3. Cf. the parable of the talents, Matt. 25:14-30.

4. Luke 10:7. See also John 10:12; and especially Matt. 10:10; I Cor. 9:4; I Tim. 5:18.

5. Robert Herrick, *Hesperides*, 1648.

6. *Analects of Confucius* (New York, Modern Library).

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CHAPTER XVI

1. Matt. 7:27. An interesting spiritual analogy in having a certain knowledge but then disregarding it is found in II Peter 2:20.

2. From God's creation of this world, providing food in it for man and beast (Gen. 1:29, 30; 9:3), the Bible recognizes the elemental need for food, clothing, and shelter as an inalienable right of man. Cf. Pss. 23:5; 104:14; 145:15; Matt. 6:11; I Tim. 4:4.

3. Matt. 7:24. Cf. Luke 6:46-49.

4. Matt. 5-7.

5. For some the Sermon on the Mount is the summary of Christ's teaching. But throughout the Gospels there are teachings and sayings of Jesus that give additional facets to this thought and conviction. The redactors in writing the Gospels undoubtedly used various sources and were free in their editing.

6. Matt. 7:1. See also Exod. 18:21; Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:12; 16:18-20; 17:8 f.; 25:1-3; I Kings 3:9; II Chron. 19:5-9; Isa. 28:5-6; John 7:24. On "judgment" the following passages will be of interest, showing that ultimate judgment is in God's hands: Hosea 4:9; Amos 3:2; Zech. 1:6; Matt. 12:37; Luke 12:47-48; John 3:19; 12:48; Rom. 2:5-12, 27; I Cor. 3:8, 13-15, et al.

7. Matt. 7:3; Luke 6:41.

8. Matt. 7:6. Cf. Prov. 9:7-8, and see Acts 13:45.

9. Matt. 7:12. Cf. Luke 6:31 and Lev. 19:18; Rom. 13:8; Gal. 5:14; I Tim. 1:5.

10. Matt. 7:13-14. Cf. Ezek. 18:30-32; Luke 9:23; John 10:9.

CHAPTER XVII

1. Matt. 15:18. Cf. Prov. 6:12; Matt. 12:34; James 3:6. The mouth reveals the inner man.

2. William Ernest Henley, *Invictus*.

3. Ovid, *Fasti*, Chap. V.
4. Matt. 15:19. Cf. Mark 7:21-22 where are listed thirteen vices, whereas Matthew has only seven. Lists of vices and sins as in Rom. 1:29-31 and Gal. 5:19-23 are more characteristic of Greco-Roman philosophy than of Judaism. See *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 7 (New York, Abingdon Press, 1951), p. 441.
5. Lillian E. Watson, *Light from Many Lamps* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1951), pp. 50 f.
6. Abraham Lincoln, Address given Feb. 11, 1861 at Springfield, Ill.
7. The Bible is redundant on its counsel regarding wise and guarded speech. Cf. Job 16:5; 27:4; Pss. 15:1-3; 37:30; 77:12; 119:13, 27, 46, 54, 172; 141:3; Prov. 10:11, 13, 19, 20-21, 31-32; 11:12-13; 13:2-3; 15:1-2, 4, 7, 23, 26, 28; 17:7, 27-28; Eccles. 3:7; Matt. 12:37; Luke 6:45; Eph. 4:22, 25, 29; Col. 4:6; James 1:19, 26; Rev. 14:5.
8. II Kings 7:9.
9. Rom. 12:2. Paul sees a spiritual and a carnal mind. Cf. Rom. 8:6. See also Eph. 4:22-23; II Cor. 2:10-11; Col. 3:10; I Peter 1:22-23, for indications of ways to the new man.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. Swami Vivekananda, and others, *Thus Spake Sri Ramakrishna* (Hollywood, Vedanta Press), p. 21.
2. Cf. Matt. 8:24; 14:24; Mark 4:37; Luke 8:24. Jesus preached by the seaside and He was close to fishermen and knew the sea.
3. Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great* (Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1928).
4. Matt. 5:16; 23:11; 26:52.
5. Leo Tolstoy, *My Confession, My Religion, The Gospel in Brief* (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1899), p. 48.
6. J. K. Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1958).

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7. Thomas Bulfinch, *Mythology* (New York, Modern Library), p. 755.
8. Lin Yutang, *The Importance of Living* (New York, The John Day Co., 1937), p. 161.
9. Matt. 26:52. Cf. Gen. 9:6; Rev. 13:10.
10. See II Cor. 9:6; Gal. 6:7.

CHAPTER XIX

1. Matt. 4:23; 10:8; Luke 9:2; 10:9. It also was Jesus' command to His disciples to engage in healing.
2. Matt. 21:12; 23:27; John 2:14.
3. Matt. 4:3.
4. Matt. 4:23; 8:16; Luke 9:1.
5. Matt. 9:1-8, 18-25, 27-30, 32-33, 35.
6. Mark 6:56.
7. Matt. 4:24.
8. John 9:4. See also John 4:34; 5:36; 6:38; 14:11.
9. Luke 13:16. See also verses 10-17.
10. Matt. 12:22-30.
11. Matt. 12:25. See also Gal. 5:15; Rev. 2:23.
12. Matt. 9:27-31.
13. Matt. 8:5-13.
14. Mark 2:5.
15. See John 9:3; 5:2-16. Note, too, Matt. 8:16-17 where His healing ministry is seen as an evidence of prophetic fulfillment, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."
16. Luke 17:11-19.
17. Luke 6:6-11.
18. John 5:1-9.
19. See Matt. 9:27-31; Luke 4:40; 5:13; 13:10-13; 22:50-51.
20. Mark 9:25-27.
21. Luke 4:39. See Matt. 8:15; Mark 1:31.
22. Mark 5:25-34; 3:10; 6:56; Luke 6:17-19.

23. Prov. 15:8. See James 5:15; Matt. 21:22; Luke 11:13; Acts 10:31.

CHAPTER XX

1. William Nichols, ed., *Words to Live By* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1949), p. 119.

2. Matt. 21:21. Cf. Matt. 17:20; Luke 17:6; James 1:6; I Cor. 13:2. See also Matt. 7:7; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9; James 5:17; I John 3:22; 5:14.

3. Prov. 3:5. See Jer. 9:23.

4. Job 13:15. Cf. II Sam. 22:3; Pss. 18:2; 91:2; 115:9; 118:8; 141:8; Isa. 26:4; 50:10; I Tim. 4:10.

5. Matt. 26:42. Cf. Matt. 7:21; 12:50; 18:14.

6. Luke 23:46.

7. See Exod. 23:23; Isa. 63:9; II Thess. 1:7; Heb. 13:2; Rev. 5:11.

8. John 14:9. See also, John 6:46; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3.

9. John 14:2, 3. See also John 12:26; 17:24; I Thess. 4:17.

10. Matt. 10:31; Luke 12:7.

11. Matt. 9:28. See Mark 1:15; 5:36; 9:23; Luke 8:50; John 1:7; 10:38; 11:15; 14:1; 20:31.

CHAPTER XXI

1. Abdul Ghani Khan, *The Pathans—A Sketch* (Peshawar, Pakistan, University Book Agency, 1958). For further reading on the Pathans, see: R. Ghirshman, *Iran—From the Earliest Times to the Islamic Conquest* (Pelican Book A239, 1954); Olaf Caroe, *The Pathans, 550 B.C.—A.D. 1957* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1958); Sir Henry Holland, *Frontier Doctor* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1958); Arnold Toynbee, "Impressions of Afghanistan and Pakistan's North-West Frontier in Relation to the Communist World." *International Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (April, 1961).

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2. Abdul Ghani Khan, *op. cit.*
3. Elbert Hubbard, *Little Journeys to the Homes of the Great*, Vol. XIII (Cleveland, World Publishing Co., 1928), p. 254.
4. Olaf Caroe, *op. cit.*
5. Thomas R. Kelly, *A Testament of Devotion* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1941).
6. Thomas R. Kelly, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.
7. Luke 18:17. Cf. Mark 10:15.
8. Matt. 11:28.
9. Matt. 11:29.
10. Matt. 6:28.
11. Matt. 13:3; Mark 4:3.
12. Matt. 10:29.

CHAPTER XXII

1. See Bonaro W. Overstreet, *Courage for Crisis* (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1943).
2. A. Mosso, *La Peur*, French translation of third Italian ed. (Paris, 1886), p. 168.
3. See Bertrand Russell, *Living Philosophies* (Cleveland, World Publishing Co, 1941), pp. 16-17.
4. Matt. 8:26. Cf. Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25.
5. John A. Broadus, "Matthew" in *American Commentary on the New Testament* (Philadelphia, Baptist Publication Society, 1886), p. 187.
6. In Matthew's version, the rebuke as reported in Mark, "Silence!" "Be muzzled," is absent. But even in this seemingly more harsh rendering, there is a quality of exaggeration that has a humorous tone and quality.
7. Cf. Rom. 4:20.
8. John Henry Parker, comp., *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament, A Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*, Sermon 31, Sec. 8 (Oxford, 1844), pp. 251-252.

CHAPTER XXIII

1. Cf. Eccles. 5:12; Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; I Tim. 5:18. See also Matt. 5:16; Acts 9:36; Gal. 6:9.
2. Ps. 90:17. Cf. Isa. 26:12; II Thess. 3:3.
3. Gen. 2:15; Exod. 23:12, 35:2; Deut. 5:13; Prov. 10:4-5; 12:11, 24, 27; 13:4, 11; 14:23; 22:29; 27:23-27; 31:27; Eccles. 9:10; 11:4, 6; Rom. 12:11; Eph. 4:28; I Tim. 5:8 et al.
4. Matt. 8:5-13.
5. See Prov. 31. Cf. also the occasion when Jesus visited Mary and Martha. There was admiration for Mary's spiritual accomplishment and an appreciation for Martha's industry also. Luke 10:38-42; John 12:2.
6. Cf. Builders, Matt. 7:24-27; Debtors, Luke 7:41-47; Barren fig tree, Luke 13:6-9; Sower, Matt. 13:3-9; Tares, Matt. 13:24-30; Mustard seed, Matt. 13:31, 32; Drawn net, Matt. 13:47-50; Good Samaritan, Luke 10:30-37; Good Shepherd, John 10:1-16; Lost piece of money, Luke 15:8-10; Laborers in vineyard, Matt. 20:1-16; Fig tree, Matt. 24:32; Talents, Matt. 25:14-30; the Vine, John 15:1-5.
7. Matt. 13:23.
8. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Great Books of The Western World, Vol. 50, p. 4266.
9. For a discussion of some of the problems and issues of some of the world's population as they face the ideologies of the East and the West, see: P. D. Devanandan and M. M. Thomas, eds., *Christian Participation in Nation-Building* (Bangalore, India, Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, 1960); Maurice Zinkin, *Development for Free Asia* (New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1956).
10. Matt. 12:43-45.

CHAPTER XXIV

1. Matt. 13:52.
2. Reprinted in *Time* magazine, (June 16, 1961), p. 40.

NOTES

3. Matt. 5:17. See also Matt. 5:18; 24:34; Mark 13:4; Rom. 13:10.
4. Luke 5:39. See also Deut. 8:4; Neh. 9:21; Prov. 23:10; Isa. 58:12; Jer. 6:16.
5. Heb. 11:16. See also Gen. 12:1.
6. Rev. 21:5. Cf. John 1:50.
7. Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37.
8. Matt. 19:16-17. Cf. Mark 10:17; Luke 10:25; 18:18.
9. Matt. 22:35-40.

CHAPTER XXV

1. Association of Colleges and Universities of the State of New York. Report No. 22 (Jan. 1961), p. 1.
2. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journal* (Feb. 1855). Sarah S. B. Yule, in *Borrowings*, 1889, attributes the statement, as follows, to Emerson, "If a man can write a better book, preach a better sermon, or make a better mouse trap than his neighbor, though he builds his house in the woods, the world will make a beaten path to his door."
3. Matt. 5:20. Cf. Rom. 2:18; 10:3; Prov. 31:29; II Cor. 3:10; Phil. 1:10; I Cor. 12:31.
4. Matt. 5:47. 5. Eccles. 9:10. 6. Matt. 5:16.

CHAPTER XXVI

1. Matt. 26:6-13. Cf. Mark 14:3; John 11:1-2; 12:3.
2. Matt. 26:2. Cf. Mark 14:1; Luke 22:1; John 13:1.
3. Matt. 26:3-5.
4. In John's Gospel it is Mary, the sister of Martha.
5. Cf. Pss. 23; 104:15; Isa. 61:3; Luke 7:46. See also Prov. 27:9; Ps. 133:2; Luke 23:56.
6. See I Sam. 15:1; II Sam. 14:2; James 5:14.
7. John 12:4-6 so portrays Judas.
8. John 21:15. See Rom. 12:20.
9. Matt. 25:31-46.

